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**Addressing Modern Slavery in Haiti and the Dominican Republic: The  
Evolving Role of Nongovernmental Organizations**

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at  
Syracuse University

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## **Abstract:**

This project examines the forms of modern day slavery that are most prevalent in Haiti and the Dominican Republic: domestic servitude and forced prostitution for the purpose of sex tourism, respectively. This paper seeks to answer the following questions:

What is the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in combatting trafficking in persons (TIP) and modern day slavery in Hispaniola? How should NGOs work with national governments, especially in states with a weak rule of law? How have the presence and scope of NGOs evolved and/or expanded over time to address modern forms of slavery?

In this paper I argue that NGOs should play a complementary role to governments; they should strive to collaborate with the state and build up state capacities to the point where the need for their services is greatly reduced, if not entirely diminished. In order for Haiti and the Dominican Republic to develop in a sustainable manner, their respective states must have the capacity, authority, and legitimacy to deliver social services to their people. When NGOs are the main providers of these services they undermine the state and hinder sustainable development. Furthermore, I contend it is unlikely that NGOs will succeed in the long-term without local knowledge and understanding of the issues their missions seek to address. I argue that NGOs should collaborate with local knowledge and skills, operating with the understanding that citizens have the historical acumen and experience of what does and does not work to address problems in their countries.

It is critical that NGOs collaborate with states or they run the risk of being expelled from the country, especially in countries with a history of occupation or imperialism. NGOs must find the balance between offering their expertise, resources, and organizational capacity and implementing culturally imperialistic programs that are irrelevant to the people they aim to serve.

This paper concludes that NGOs are most effective when working in conjunction with local and national governments. This sort of collaboration facilitates sustainable development and stability by better ensuring that the needs of the people are met. Only when there is stability can the kind of economic growth needed to develop, flourish.

© Meghan Schneider April 22, 2014

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## **Executive Summary:**

This paper begins by comparing the differences between modern slavery and the historical forms of slavery that most people are more familiar with. It seeks to familiarize the reader with the modern forms of slavery that will be discussed in greater detail later in the paper. This paper aims to answer the questions:

What is the role of and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in combatting trafficking in persons (TIP) and modern-day slavery in Hispaniola? How should NGOs work with national governments, especially in states with a weak rule of law? How have the presence and scope of NGOs evolved and/or expanded over time to address modern forms of slavery?

The methodology of this research project predominately consisted of reading secondary sources such as journal articles, books, and government reports. To a lesser extent I relied on personal accounts from modern slavery survivors and interviews with personnel that work in both the government and local NGOs in Haiti.

I began my research by studying general background information regarding the history, politics, and culture of both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Having a solid understanding of each country enabled me to better grasp why current policies existed as well as why they were or were not

successful. Understanding why and how these mechanisms failed is key in analyzing and proposing new measures and alternative solutions.

My project focuses on the most prevalent forms of modern slavery on the island of Hispaniola, which is comprised of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It examines the root causes and characteristics of each and discusses the ways in which NGOs can effectively counter modern slavery. This paper provides a brief summary of the capacities in which the role of NGOs has evolved over the past two decades. It considers the ways in which NGOs should work in order to maximize their effectiveness and sustainability.

The two forms of modern slavery at the center of this paper are the *rèstavek* system in Haiti and forced prostitution for the purpose of sex tourism in the Dominican Republic. Modern slavery presents in myriad forms all around the world, making it markedly different from the forced labor practices that were at the core of traditional slavery. There is a growing body of research on modern day slavery, its various forms, and ways to combat it. However, much of this research is predominantly focused on South East Asia, and to a lesser extent, Eastern Europe. As such, it was important to me to focus my research on Latin America and draw light on to the ways in which this widespread heinous crime affects people in the region.

While reading this paper it is important to bear in mind the difficulties that are inherent in studying an illicit industry of this sort. It is difficult, if not virtually impossible, to gather precise estimates of the number of people affected. Moreover, the secretive nature of the issue makes it hard for

researchers and scholars to come to a consensus on even the most basic matters, such as definitions, which of course presents a series of obstacles for me as a secondary researcher.

In Haiti the *rèstavek* practice is the most common form of modern slavery. It is a form of domestic labor that stems from push-pull factors existing between extremely impoverished rural regions and slightly better off urban centers. Poor rural families have too many children and are financially unable to send them to school or provide them with adequate food. Urban families, particularly mothers, need help around the house, running errands, and preparing meals because husbands do not contribute to household work. Giving in to these push-pull factors, urban matriarchs go to the countryside to find household help. Rural families willingly send their children to the cities to work and perhaps receive an education, seeing it as a great opportunity for them to climb up in society and have a better life than that which their parents could give them. Once in the city, many children find themselves in a situation of *rèstavek* – inescapable forced labor; they are not given the education they were promised, they are treated markedly different than the other children in the household, and they often suffer abuse, be it physical, emotional, or sexual.

According to the Global Slavery Index, between 200,000 and 220,000 people are currently enslaved in Haiti, meaning that they are in a situation where they do not have free will, are under the threat of violence, and are being exploited. Some estimates suggest that up to 500,000 people are enslaved today



in Haiti.<sup>1</sup> The majority of these slaves are within the *rèstavek* system. The *rèstavek* system is a cultural norm in Haiti, making it all the more difficult to combat. This makes local knowledge even more essential within the work of NGOs.

Forced prostitution for the purpose of sexual tourism is the most widespread form of slavery in the Dominican Republic. Legalized prostitution in the Dominican Republic opens a window for exploitation because it blurs the lines of control. Many women willingly enter into prostitution on their own, as a way to support themselves; to be sure, this paper is not about them. This paper is about the people, typically women, who work in the sex industry and have been completely stripped of their agency and freewill. These women are controlled by violence and are unable to leave.

Sex tourism is an industry in which people either travel abroad or for a significant distance with the explicit purpose of sexually exploiting another human being. The sex tourism industry has grown along side of the traditional tourism industry in the Dominican Republic. Its growth is facilitated by the legalized sex industry, cheaper and easier travel, and special travel agencies, which cater to sex tourists. According to the 2013 Global Slavery Index, the Dominican Republic currently has between 22,000 and 24,000 people living in slavery.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

<sup>2</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 – Dominican Republic."

Further in the paper I present a case study in which I examine two specific NGOs that work to address the main forms of modern slavery plaguing Haiti and the Dominican Republic: Beyond Borders and the Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN), respectively. To do this I researched each organization and the ways in which they operate. I gained insight from their reporting forms and annual summaries as well as documents and publications that they have disseminated throughout the years. The case study on the Haitian NGO relies heavily on interviews that I conducted during a trip to Port-au-Prince in March of 2014. I studied the wider body of NGOs in addition to specific organizations in each country to garner a better understanding of how they should operate. The study of specific NGOs provided a smaller context in which the specific workings of these organizations could be understood and analyzed.

The subject matter discussed and the findings of this paper are significant because they focus on a region in which the issue of modern day slavery is traditionally not studied. Thus, this paper serves as a reminder of how modern slavery touches every corner of the globe, yet is often overlooked or not known about at all.

This paper looks critically at the ways NGOs should address the issues presented; it does not simply assume that NGOs are necessary actors in combatting modern slavery due to reasons such as a lack of governmental capacity. But, rather, it argues for NGO-governmental collaboration that will hopefully result in long-term sustainable development and the upholding of

human rights. This conclusion is significant because it can be applied to other countries with similar problems, leading to a more comprehensive global fight to end modern slavery forever.

### **Acknowledgements:**

This experience has been truly inspiring. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend an extended period of time researching an issue that is so important to me. I am thankful to the Renée Crown University Honors Program for giving me the opportunity to write a Capstone on a topic that truly fascinates and touches me. Modern slavery has intrigued me for a long time and I wanted to do in depth research on a region that I love but that has been traditionally ignored from such research. I wanted to study this issue because many people are unaware of it; they believe slavery died in 1865 with the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution.<sup>3</sup> It is important to me to bring awareness to this issue because it is a gross violation of human rights that is often overlooked; nothing can be done until people are aware of the issue.

I would like to thank the amazing panel of professors that have guided me through this lengthy process. Firstly, my advisors, Professors Cecilia Green and Laurence Thomas, who have helped me through the stages of refining my research questions, finding sources, and tailoring my interests to a cohesive and clear research paper. They have been great resources and I am thankful for their guidance.

Secondly, I would like to thank my reader, Professor Gladys McCormick. Professor McCormick has helped me edit and revise both my ideas

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<sup>3</sup> Byng, Rhonesha. "Slavery Ended 148 Years Ago Today, But We Still Have A Long Way To Go." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 18 Dec. 2013. Web. 18 Apr. 2014. <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/18/end-of-slavery-anniversary\\_n\\_4466330.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/18/end-of-slavery-anniversary_n_4466330.html)>.

and my writing. Her knowledge and passion for Latin America and the Caribbean have been contagious and have added to my already profound love for the region. She has been incredibly supportive and enthusiastic about my research and that has encouraged me to stick with it.

Finally, I am thankful to all of the amazing professors that I have had while at Syracuse University (SU). They have made me incredibly passionate about international affairs and human rights. My time at SU has truly changed me and has made me excited for what the future.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone in Haiti that graciously welcomed me and helped me with my research. I thank Carla Bluntschli for blessing me with her hospitality, sharing her connections and arranging interviews, and translating. I sincerely thank everyone that allowed me to interview them. You all have profoundly deepened my understanding of the *rèstavek* practice and the role of NGOs in ways I never could have imagined.

This paper is dedicated to the unsung heroes of our time who are working to end slavery once and for all.

**“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”**

**-Nelson Mandela**

## Chapter 1: Introduction

When thinking of slavery, the first thing that comes to many people's mind are images of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade – men, women, and sometimes even children shackled and chained, living under constant threats of violence, unable to escape. What many people do not picture are the millions of people living in slavery today. Modern slavery takes a markedly different form than the whips and chains of colonial times. Despite being outlawed in every country, slavery never disappeared, but rather it was driven underground, giving way to an evolved and hidden form of one of humanity's greatest evils.

Many of today's slaves live among us. Perhaps the girl next to you on the metro is a sex slave, forced by her pimp to sell herself for his financial gain. Maybe slaves made the shirt you are wearing. Maybe slaves, forced to produce more and more or face the wrath of their master, cultivated the chocolate you bought at the local grocery store. Slavery has infiltrated every aspect of our society, and we are all connected to it, whether we know it or not.

Many experts agree that trafficking in persons (TIP) and modern slavery are growing concerns in all regions of the world. According to U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) estimates, there are currently between 12 and 27 million people living in slavery, be it sexual or labor exploitation.<sup>4</sup> An

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<sup>4</sup> "Countering Trafficking in Persons." *U.S. Agency for International Development*. USAID, 26 Sept. 2013. Web. 17 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.usaid.gov/trafficking>>.

exact estimate is almost impossible due to the clandestine nature of the industry. The growth in TIP is facilitated by: "porous borders, absent rule of law, failure to prosecute traffickers, complicity of corrupt officials, modern communication technology." <sup>5</sup>

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), children account for one in five victims of TIP; however, in poorer regions this number is higher. The UNODC estimates that women account for two thirds of global trafficking victims. <sup>6</sup>

The TIP industry is estimated to accrue \$32 billion annually, making it the third most lucrative form of international organized crime, behind illegal drugs and the arms trade. <sup>7</sup> Of this \$32 billion, \$15.5 billion comes from industrialized countries. This is emblematic of the truly global nature of the problem of TIP; thus, any efforts to combat it must take this into account. NGOs, international organizations, and international law play key roles in combatting TIP and all forms of modern day slavery.

### ***Defining Key Concepts***

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<sup>5</sup> "Countering Trafficking in Persons." *U.S. Agency for International Development*.

<sup>6</sup> "Human Trafficking: People for Sale." *UN Office on Drugs and Crime*.

<sup>7</sup> Sabyan, Christian, Emily Smith, and Manav Tanneeru. "A Profitable Enterprise." *CNN Freedom Project*. CNN, 18 Oct. 2013.201<<https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/htrafficking.html>>.



There are several key concepts, such as human trafficking, modern slavery, and forced prostitution, which are central to this paper. Below I will provide working definitions for these key terms and outline the characteristics of each. However, to begin, it is important to keep in mind that there is no flawless way to define these concepts, given their ever-changing and secretive nature. Definitions do change over time, as clearly evidenced by modern definitions of slavery; however, these changes take time because the deviations from traditional conceptualizations are slow to come out publicly. The act of defining these terms is somewhat of a revolving door – once they are clearly defined and up-to-date, the industry may change. The variation and necessary wiggle room within these working definitions explain the great ranges between estimates.

For the purposes of this paper human trafficking will be defined in accordance with the definition set forth by the *United Nations (UN) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. Thus TIP shall be defined as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Blackstone’s 191.

I firmly believe it is worth emphasizing the fact that coercion is not limited to physical force, but may well be economic coercion in which victims have no financial alternatives but to put themselves into a risky situation. In my opinion, the UN definition fails to make this important distinction. The UNODC further expands upon the definition of the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, by establishing three fundamental components of TIP within the definition put forth by the Protocol: the act (what is done), the means (how it is done), and the purpose (why it is done). The act of trafficking includes the “recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons.” The means include, but shall not be limited to, “threats or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, and giving payments or benefits.” Although the idea of “giving payments or benefits” may not initially seem to be a means of TIP, it emphasizes the role that economic coercion plays in cases of TIP. The most basic purpose of TIP is exploitation. This exploitation includes the “prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices, removal of organs, and more.”<sup>9</sup> The elements of TIP explained by the UNDOC can help to more easily

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<sup>9</sup> "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime." *What Is Human Trafficking?*

determine whether a given case actually constitutes TIP; if the case falls within the confines of each of these three elements, it is indeed trafficking.

Modern day slavery is another concept that plays a central role throughout this paper. In some ways modern slavery is perhaps more difficult to define than human trafficking because the word “slave” varies linguistically throughout different languages, whereas “trafficking” clearly implies movement from Point A to Point B. Moreover, because slavery takes different forms in different parts of the world, it means different things to different populations. Additionally, slavery has different historical connotations throughout the world; these historical perceptions of slavery impact the ways in which slavery is conceptualized today.

Kevin Bales, a modern abolitionist and founder of Free the Slaves, does a good job of defining slavery within the confines of these cultural and historical differences. Bales emphasizes the importance of putting the daily lives of slaves at the forefront of any comprehensive definition, suggesting that this is even more important than legal definitions because those too vary by country.<sup>10</sup> I firmly agree with this assertion by Bales; it would be extremely difficult to come up with one all encompassing legal definition of modern slavery due to the ways in which it varies across time and place. Attempting to formulate such a sweeping definition would be at great risk of being exclusionary and overlooking victims as

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<sup>10</sup> Bales, Kevin. "Defining and Measuring Modern Slavery." *Free the Slaves*. Free the Slaves, 2007. Web. 1 Apr. 2014.  
<[http%3A%2F%2Fwww.freetheslaves.net%2FDocument.Doc%3Fid%3D21](http://www.freetheslaves.net/Document.Doc%3Fid%3D21)>.

a result of technicalities and rhetoric. I maintain that it is more important to have some degree of flexibility so that definitions ensure inclusivity and do not shut victims out. I think it is best to err on the side of caution, being too inclusive rather than too exclusive because at least then the hardships of these people are being affirmed. Even if a situation is debatably on the definitional line of what shall be considered slavery, it is still clearly a form of exploitation and letting it fall under the category of slavery brings attention and resources to help combat such appalling situations. In such instances I believe it is imperative that the basic principles of human rights triumph over minute linguistic differences.

In terms of defining modern slavery, I believe it is more important to focus on a set of central criteria that are present in all situations. Focusing on the human condition of slavery and the characteristics that are present in all cases, regardless of the form of slavery, region, or time period, puts human rights at the forefront. This prevents detractors from insinuating that modern slavery is not “real” slavery simply because they are stuck on the historical images and antiquated definitions of slavery. I would argue that there is no one true form of slavery, but rather there exists a set of characteristics that are indicative of slavery and its evolutions. Slavery has been present since before even the most rudimentary early written laws.

For the purposes of this paper I will use three key factors to define modern day slavery: loss of free will, use of violence as a means of control, and exploitation. I believe the key component of modern day slavery is a loss of free will – victims are unable to make their own decisions and are not free to leave

their situation. The second key factor is the use of violence as a means to maintain control over victims and instill fear. Violence is used to intimidate victims into submission and not reporting their situation. This violence is not necessarily only physical; psychological violence in the forms of threats against loved ones has become a sort of hallmark of modern slavery. The third key component of modern slavery is exploitation, which most frequently occurs in the form economic exploitation that benefits the owner. This economic exploitation may also be accompanied by some form of debt bondage in which slaves are charged for their lodging, food, clothing, etc. Their masters force them to work off the debt but keep charging them so they will never be able to dig themselves out of debt.

Once these factors have been established modern day slavery can take many forms, including “human trafficking, debt bondage slavery, contract slavery, slavery linked to religious practices, or state-sponsored forced labor”.<sup>11</sup> At its most basic level, slavery is “a relationship in which one person is controlled by violence through violence, the threat of violence, or psychological coercion, has lost free will and free movement, is exploited economically, and paid nothing beyond subsistence.”<sup>12</sup> Another important distinguishing factor between modern slavery and historical ideations of slavery is that today there is not necessarily a sale or exchange of money between a buyer and seller as was common in slave

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<sup>11</sup> Bales, Kevin. "Defining and Measuring Modern Slavery." *Free the Slaves*. Free the Slaves, 2007. Web. 1 Apr. 2014.

<[http%3A%2F%2Fwww.freetheslaves.net%2FDocument.Doc%3Fid%3D21](http://www.freetheslaves.net/Document.Doc3Fid3D21)>.

<sup>12</sup> Bales, Kevin. "Defining and Measuring Modern Slavery." *Free the Slaves*. Free the Slaves, 2007. Web. 1 Apr. 2014.

<[http%3A%2F%2Fwww.freetheslaves.net%2FDocument.Doc%3Fid%3D21](http://www.freetheslaves.net/Document.Doc3Fid3D21)>.

auctions of the past; modern ownership and control stem from violence.

Although they overlap in many ways, human trafficking and modern day slavery are not interchangeable terms. Human trafficking requires some form of movement, whereas modern slavery does not. Human trafficking is more concerned with the way in which a person enters into a situation of exploitation, while modern slavery is concerned with the characteristics that define an existing situation of exploitation. Human trafficking requires transit, though not necessarily internationally. Modern slavery does not have to be international, as is often thought when compared to historical concepts of slavery, most notably the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Slavery may very well be domestic.

***In Focus: Forced Domestic Servitude & Prostitution for the Purpose of  
Sex Tourism***

This paper will explore the role of NGOs in combatting two distinct forms of modern day slavery, forced domestic servitude and prostitution for the purpose of sex tourism, in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, respectively. This paper is concerned principally with NGOs that operate on a global scale but are predominantly locally staffed. They may have offices in multiple countries, but the bulk of their personnel come from the country in which they operate. I am seeking to answer the following questions:

What is the role of and NGOs in combatting TIP and modern-day  
slavery in Hispaniola? How should NGOs work with national

governments, especially in states with a weak rule of law? How have the presence and scope of NGOs evolved and/or expanded over time to address modern forms of slavery?

I am interested in understanding how NGOs can maximize their capacity to effectively combat TIP and sex slavery. Many of these organizations have limited resources; thus, it is crucial that they operate as efficiently as possible. Furthermore, I want to examine whether it would be most resourceful for anti-TIP efforts to focus predominantly on causal factors (e.g.: poverty, lack of accessible and quality education, machismo attitudes, and gender based violence) and hope they reduce or eliminate TIP as a byproduct, or if such anti-TIP initiatives should focus principally on punishing offenders in order to increase risks and decrease individual criminal gains, with the hope of deterring future violators by making the industry less desirable. I am hesitant to grant that anti-TIP efforts can ever be successful without first addressing causal factors. To better understand these factors I will examine their historical roots, particularly the contrasts that exist between the two nations.

NGOs play a vital role in addressing these issues because in both cases the state has very limited capacity. In Haiti the state is largely ineffective, and the 2010 earthquake exacerbated this weakness. However, the state is slowly rebuilding critical institutions. A stronger state exists in the Dominican Republic, though humanitarian and women's issues remain far from a priority.

With topics such as education, public health, and developing basic infrastructure at the forefront of each state's agenda, women's rights are continually relegated to the backburner and somehow deemed lesser issues that don't need to be solved immediately. The relatively weak states that exist in both countries present an ideal case in which to specifically study the role of NGOs, as well as their potential. Given the ever-changing nature of the illicit slavery industry, perhaps states, especially developing states, simply do not have the resources and/or capacity to fully address this issue on their own. In Haiti and the Dominican Republic NGOs have come to fill this void; perhaps this model can be successfully applied in similar countries.

It is essential that both states prioritize women's and children's issues, as society cannot fully progress and develop when part of its population is discriminated against and viewed as lesser. Building up women and children and empowering them promotes sustainable and successful development. These two groups directly impact future generations; therefore, they are directly involved in effecting forthcoming developmental initiatives.

Examining the issue of modern slavery with regards to women in Hispaniola will offer insight into developmental gaps such as a lack of sustainability and inclusion. Understanding the historical factors that have contributed to an ever growing TIP industry will better equip policymakers and legislators to advocate more successful measures of countering TIP, by



providing them with insights into why past measures have or have not succeeded. Ascertaining *why* previous methods failed provides these key personnel with information that will help them make necessary changes that will make future measures successful. These concluding policy implications will provide a more inclusive, thus solid, foundation upon which the states in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic can begin a legitimate and lasting path towards long-term development.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic present a very interesting case for comparative study because these two diverse nations share a relatively small area of land. Both states are plagued by many of the same issues (e.g.: poor infrastructure, poverty [particularly in rural areas], little importance placed on women's issues, and lack of accessible quality education), thus allowing for a clear and accurate comparison of causal factors of modern slavery. Modern slavery is a gross violation of human rights and, unfortunately, it is a growing issue in all parts of the world. Comparing seemingly different nations such as Haiti and the Dominican Republic offers a context in which we may be able to draw similar policy-based and/or legislative solutions and conclusions about collaborative measures that should be taken by NGOs in other parts of the world. The sort of resource and information sharing that would stem from joint efforts by NGOs based in Hispaniola could be translated into and applied to the bigger picture of global modern slavery, leading to more comprehensive programs that may be more effective in addressing modern slavery and TIP,

thus better facilitating their eradication.

## **Chapter 2: Explaining the Evolution of Slavery**

If you asked someone today about slavery, they would likely describe it as a tragedy of the distant past. Their account would undoubtedly involve some sort of discussion of race, plantation living, trans-Atlantic travel, public auctions, and brutal beatings. It may end with a story of triumph, of good conquering evil in the struggle for abolition and freedom for all. There may be mention of abolitionist heroes such as Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglass.

This account would be factually wrong, because slavery still exists today; in fact, it is thriving today. Nevertheless you would not be able to write this person off as ignorant or blame them for omitting the details or mere existence of the era of modern slavery. Modern slavery is often swept under the rug and ignored, making it far more difficult to address it than the publicly accepted historical form of slavery that we learned about in grade school.

### ***Hallmarks of the Modern Slave Trade***

Today's slavery is markedly different than that of the past; this section will explore how and why these changes came about. The evolution of slavery came about as a result of three key factors. First is the massive population growth that has occurred during the past century. Population growth was most substantial in regions that are now home to the majority of the world's slaves.

This population growth put added strain on poor nations with already limited resources and as a result it coincided with an increase in vulnerable and poor populations, many of which became slaves.<sup>13</sup>

The second factor is the advent of unprecedented levels of economic globalization and expansion of neoliberal policies. In the modern world, businesses have become uncompromisingly focused on keeping costs down, and cheap labor makes that possible. The expansion of economic globalization and modernization made the rich richer and the poor poorer. The retreat of the state in many cases resulted in less stringent labor monitoring practices, allowing companies to exploit vulnerable populations with few consequences.

Third is a growing culture of corporate greed and corruption that has accompanied economic globalization and increasing pressures to keep prices as low as possible. There is no better way to keep prices low than free labor. This greed is dominating the traditional social structures such as communal subsistence farming that may have safeguarded prospective slaves in the past.

<sup>14</sup> In many cases the shift towards large-scale, for-profit agriculture resulted in the world's poor having their land unceremoniously taken from them. This shattering of traditional social structures and livelihoods left the poor with few options, pushing many into slavery.

As the world develops and modernizes, millions of people around the

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<sup>13</sup> See graph in Appendix B for specific information on global population growth.

<sup>14</sup> Bales, Kevin. "Chapter 7: What Can Be Done?" *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley, CA: U of California, 2004. 232. Print.

world are paying the price. William Greider wrote of economic modernization, saying:

The great paradox of this economic revolution is that its new technologies enable people and nations to take sudden leaps into modernity, while at the same time they promote the renewal of once-forbidden barbarisms. Amid the newness of things, exploitation of the weak by the strong also flourishes.<sup>15</sup>

Though he was not referring to slavery, Greider's remark could easily be applied to the ways in which global development has only been made possible through the brutal exploitation of vulnerable populations. The newness of modern amenities and comforts experienced by elites and a newfound middle class, are distractions from the brutalities that made such things possible. For instance, when we wake up in the morning and enjoy a nice cup of imported coffee, we don't stop to think about where it came from. Thinking about the realities of economic modernization and globalization detract from our personal comforts and thus are ignored.

One of the reasons many people are unaware that modern slavery exists lies in a definitional issue. Slavery, by its very definition, implies ownership; nevertheless, today it is illegal in every country to own another human being. So how does slavery persist if it is illegal to own an individual? This has been

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<sup>15</sup> Bales, Kevin. "Chapter 7: What Can Be Done?" *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley, CA: U of California, 2004. 233. Print.

made possible because the idea of ownership has evolved along with slavery. Ownership in the context of modern slavery is not the result of a simple financial transaction like it was in the age of slave auctions. Today's ownership is not a legal ownership of property, but rather it is the exercise of control through violence.<sup>16</sup> Slaves are unable to leave their masters for fear of violence, death, or harm to loved ones. This change in the conceptualization of ownership is a good thing for slaveholders because it gives them the same amount of control without the responsibility, making today's slaves even more of a replaceable commodity. Furthering the devaluation of slaves is the simple economic principle of supply and demand – today's pool of potential slaves is brimming with millions of vulnerable people and as such their individual value has plummeted.

The affordability of slaves has made them cost-effective laborers in an ever-growing array of industries, thus increasing demand. In historic slavery scarcity, as well as major transportation costs, made slaves a major financial investment, costing on average \$40,000 (in today's dollar value). The increase in expansive transportation networks, cheap travel, porous borders, and a larger supply pool has resulted in an astonishing drop in the price of slaves. Today the

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<sup>16</sup> Bales, Kevin. "Chapter 7: What Can Be Done?" *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley, CA: U of California, 2004. 5-6. Print.

average slave costs just \$90.<sup>17</sup> The decrease in purchasing price is complemented by an increase in profitability, making today's slavery industry a thriving and lucrative business.

The decrease in financial worth of today's slaves is paralleled by a decrease in the value of human life; today's slaves are easily replaceable – if they become too difficult to control or if they break from exhaustion or disease, their death will not have a significant financial impact on their masters. They can easily be replaced with newer, healthier, and more energetic slaves. In this sense, slaves are not people; they are moneymaking machines, commodities to be used up, broken, and disposed of. This is in stark contrast to the slavery of the past when owners had a financial obligation to keep their slaves healthy and strong enough to work.

### ***Heroes of Today & The Modern Abolitionist Movement***

Modern slavery exists largely in the dark, making it difficult to assess the exact extent of the problem. However, just as the continuation of globalization and the increasing availability of international communication have aided the growth of this horrid industry, it can be used as a tool to combat it, making people more aware of modern slavery. There is a growing social

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<sup>17</sup> "Modern Slavery - Free the Slaves." *Modern Slavery - Free the Slaves*. Free the Slaves, n.d. Web. 10 Apr. 2014.  
<<https://www.freetheslaves.net/sslpage.aspx?pid=301>>.

movement to bring to light the dark sides of modernization that the developed world has previously tried to ignore in order to protect their personal comforts. Younger generations are beginning to speak out about the ways in which economic growth occurs at the expense of the world's most vulnerable people.

Perhaps the newness of the modernity that Greider spoke of is beginning to wear off, and the world is able to see the areas in which barbarism is prevailing. However, these social movements are simply not enough. In order for there to be any real push back against modern slavery, the industrialized world must place a higher value on human rights and dignity than cheap goods and increasing profits.

There is no strong abolitionist movement or major heroes in the story of modern day slavery. I believe this is because it is incredibly difficult to actively build a movement against something that is, by its very nature, hidden away. In my opinion, today's heroes are those living in modern slavery. Their lives have been taken away from them. They have given their lives to the developed world's greed and callousness, receiving nothing in return. And some, the ones who manage to survive and escape, dedicate themselves to ending this practice, providing NGOs and government entities with unparalleled insight into the operation of this illicit industry.

### **Chapter 3: Trafficking in Persons in its Many Forms**

Trafficking in person occurs in many forms, the majority of which fall into some categorization of modern slavery. This paper will focus on two forms of modern slavery, forced prostitution in the context of sexual tourism and domestic labor in the form of the *rèstavek* system. In many instances these forms of modern slavery may also fall under the umbrella of human trafficking.

This paper considers the issue of forced prostitution within the sex tourism industry in the Dominican Republic. It is important to acknowledge that all participants in prostitution are not enslaved; some do voluntarily enter the industry in order to make a living. It would be difficult to determine what percentage of prostitutes willingly enter the industry due to the coercive nature that forces unwilling participants into silence. Forced prostitution is a form of modern slavery, meaning that it involves a removal of free will, violence as a means of control, and exploitation.

The concept of sexual tourism plays a central role in this paper. Sexual tourism shall be defined as, but not limited to, travel abroad for the purposes of exploiting, sexually or otherwise, a non-consenting individual. It is important to highlight that non-consenting is not limited to children under the legal age of consent, though children are the most common victims. Women, and even occasionally men, held against their will in any way (i.e.: debt bondage, physical force, or captivity) by a third party who exploits them shall be considered non-consenting adults. In the Dominican Republic the legal lines of sexual tourism are blurred by the presence of legalized prostitution. Many argue that if a woman is prostituting herself she is thereby consenting to sex, but this is only true in cases



where women have entered into prostitution by their own volition and are in no way influenced by coercion or third party demands. However, in cases of sexual slavery there are many factors (i.e.: fear of reprisal, fear for the safety of loved ones, violence resulting from failure to make pimps enough money, etc.) that nullify this seemingly inherent consent.

Forced domestic labor is the other form of modern slavery that will be focused on in this paper. In Haiti forced domestic labor is embodied in the *rèstavek* system. The *rèstavek* system more closely resembles the traditional form of slavery that many people envision. It results from a push-pull dynamic that exists between poor rural areas and semi-developed urban centers.

#### **Chapter 4: Haiti: The *Rèstavek* Problem**

According to the 2013 Global Slavery Index, Haiti ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in prevalence of slavery by percentage of population and 17<sup>th</sup> by the total number of enslaved individuals. This is especially astounding when comparing similarly ranked countries, given that Haiti only has a population of slightly more than 10 million people. The Index estimates that between 200,000 and 220,000 people are currently enslaved in Haiti, meaning that they are in a situation where they do not have free will, are under the threat of violence, and are being exploited. Some estimates suggest that up to 500,000 people are enslaved today in Haiti.<sup>18</sup> Haiti has roughly the same number of slaves as Indonesia (total country population of

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<sup>18</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

246 million people <sup>19)</sup> and Brazil (total country population of nearly 200 million people <sup>20)</sup>, with only a fraction of the population. <sup>21</sup> Regionally, Haiti has by far the largest enslaved population. Peru ranks a distant second in the Americas and 65<sup>th</sup> overall. Haiti has two and a half times as many slaves as Peru and only one third of the total population. <sup>22</sup>

The vast majority of the enslaved in Haiti are domestic laborers, or *rèstaveks*. According to the Index, most victims of trafficking and modern day slavery within Haiti are Haitian nationals. The domestic nature of Haitian slavery shows how deeply entrenched in the culture and national norms the *rèstavek* system is. However, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has reported that there are approximately 200 women trafficked from the Dominican Republic into Haiti annually. <sup>23</sup> These Dominican women are primarily trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation in wealthy areas and major ports. <sup>24</sup>

The *rèstavek* practice is deeply rooted in Haitian customs. It is fueled by push-pull factors that are present in Haiti. Rural regions are often tremendously poor and lack basic services such as education and health facilities. Many rural families have more children than they are able to care for. Urban families are slightly better off although women are over worked, having to take care of all household matters with little help from their husbands. Even in urban areas, daily life in Haiti is much more difficult than it is in developed countries. The lack of

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<sup>19</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Indonesia."

<sup>20</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Brazil."

<sup>21</sup> *The Global Slavery Index 2013*. Pp. 122.

<sup>22</sup> *The Global Slavery Index 2013*. Pp. 199.

<sup>23</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

<sup>24</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

infrastructure makes basic chores like laundry, grocery shopping, cooking, and daily errands far more time consuming than they are in other parts of the world. As a result the overworked women in the urban centers need a helping hand; their need is met by the rural families' desire to provide a better future for their children. The rural family sees sending one child off to work in the city as a benefit for the child, as they have likely been promised education, but also their other children, because they will have one less mouth to feed. The rural child goes to the city with a friend of the family, a relative, or even a stranger in hopes of working and receiving an education. There is often no exchange of money, or sale per se; it is often an agreement made in good faith – the urban family will provide the rural child with education and work in their home, and the child will be taken care of. In reality this situation, more often than not, ends up fitting the criteria for modern slavery. Rêstaveks often experience abuse that is physical, mental, and sometimes even sexual. They are not treated like other children in the home and are often threatened with violence or threats against their families.

Haiti is a prime breeding ground for a successful trafficking in persons industry as a result of extreme levels of poverty, lack of accessible social services, and a general deficiency of accessible information and educational programs concerning the dangers of trafficking. The rêstavek system is deeply entangled in Haitian culture. Although the system is not necessarily malicious by nature, it is very commonly abused, resulting in large numbers of rêstaveks finding themselves embroiled in abusive situations. Rêstaveks are commonly denied basic human comforts such as sufficient food and water, a bed, and the education that

they were promised. Once a child is in a situation of exploitation, it is very difficult for them to escape due to a lack of information regarding available resources and/or services, isolation, and threats of violence. Rèstaveks that do escape often end up on the streets and remain at risk of being further exploited, either through forced begging or prostitution.<sup>25</sup> It is estimated that today 1 in 10 Haitian children are exploited.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to having a major market for domestic slavery within its borders, Haiti is also a large source country for trafficking, mainly for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Haitian victims are most commonly trafficked to the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, and North America.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Haiti serves as a point of transit for trafficking victims from throughout the region heading to the United States.<sup>28</sup> Children are most likely to be trafficked in Haiti, although there are cases of adults being exploited for the purpose of agriculture, construction, and commercial sex work within Haiti as well as to other Caribbean countries, South America, and the United States.<sup>29</sup>

The large population of internally displaced people (IDPs) that has been present since the 2010 earthquake is especially vulnerable to being trafficked. When the quake first struck 2.3 million people were displaced<sup>30</sup>; in March of

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<sup>25</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

<sup>26</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

<sup>27</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

<sup>28</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

<sup>29</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti."

<sup>30</sup> "Haiti: A Humanitarian Crisis in Need of a Developmental Solution." *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*.

2013, there remained 357,000 displaced people.<sup>31</sup> The IDP situation is exacerbated by repeated displacement resulting from forced evictions, threats of violence, and natural disasters. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), at least 58,000 people in Haiti were displaced because of Tropical Storm Sandy in October of 2012.<sup>32</sup> Repeated displacement makes people even more vulnerable, increasing their risk of being trafficked and/or exploited and distancing them from adequate resources. Additionally, repeated displacement puts IDPs at risk of food insecurity, which leads to further displacement.<sup>33</sup> The IDMC estimates that approximately 20% of Haiti's population is affected by food insecurity.<sup>34</sup> This vicious cycle of repeated displacement and lack of permanent housing and infrastructure creates an overwhelming population of vulnerable individuals and a perfect climate for a thriving trafficking industry.

The large population of stateless people of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic, primarily around the border, present yet another substantial vulnerable population. Historically the Dominican Republic granted citizenship to those born within its borders; however, in 2004 it redrew its citizenship legislation making it so that children of Haitian migrant workers born in the Dominican Republic were not considered citizens. Children born to foreign nationals in the

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<sup>31</sup> "Global Slavery Index 2013 - Haiti." *Walk Free Foundation Global Slavery Index 2013*.

<sup>32</sup> "Haiti: A Humanitarian Crisis in Need of a Developmental Solution." *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*.

<sup>33</sup> "Haiti: A Humanitarian Crisis in Need of a Developmental Solution." *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*.

<sup>34</sup> "Haiti: A Humanitarian Crisis in Need of a Developmental Solution." *Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre*.

Dominican Republic are considered to be “in transit”. Before the law was changed, the “in transit” status was for intended only for foreign diplomats.<sup>35</sup> In order to be considered a citizen, a child must have at least one parent with Dominican blood.<sup>36</sup> This term is now being applied to people of Haitian decent that have resided in the Dominican Republic for generations.<sup>37</sup> The new interpretation of who is in fact “in transit” is often quite arbitrary, with nurses in the maternity ward often making a determination of citizenship based off of the mother’s last name or skin color rather than asking the mother for her citizenship papers.<sup>38</sup> Estimates suggest that 250,000 Haitian immigrants born after 1929 have been made stateless by the constitutional change determining citizenship for those born in the Dominican Republic to foreign nationals.<sup>39</sup> Another 460,000 non-Haitian immigrants are affected by this constitutional change.<sup>40</sup> The Supreme Court ruling that approved the change to the constitution is final; however, human rights activists are trying to bring the case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, where it could still potentially be overruled. Activists are also trying to bring the issue before the UN Human Rights Committee claiming that

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<sup>35</sup> Rojas, Ricardo. "Dominican Court Ruling Renders Hundreds of Thousands Stateless."

<sup>36</sup> Rojas, Ricardo. "Dominican Court Ruling Renders Hundreds of Thousands Stateless."

<sup>37</sup> Cardenas, Raymundo. "Statelessness in the Dominican Republic."

<sup>38</sup> Cardenas, Raymundo. "Statelessness in the Dominican Republic."

<sup>39</sup> Rojas, Ricardo. "Dominican Court Ruling Renders Hundreds of Thousands Stateless."

<sup>40</sup> Rojas, Ricardo. "Dominican Court Ruling Renders Hundreds of Thousands Stateless."

the ruling violates international law.<sup>41</sup> According to Manuel Maria Mercaderes, the President of the National Human Rights Commission, the court's ruling clearly exemplified historic and persistent racist and xenophobic tensions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.<sup>42</sup>

## **Chapter 5: The Dominican Republic: Sex Tourism**

The most prevalent form of modern day slavery in the Dominican Republic is forced prostitution for the purpose of sex tourism. Forced prostitution is a form of modern slavery. It occurs when a sex worker's agency is taken away from him or her and they become a tool of an exploiter. In circumstances of forced prostitution, workers are often in a situation of debt bondage in which their pimp controls them both physically and financially. In the Dominican Republic, the forced prostitution market fuels and is fueled by a strong sex tourism industry. Sex tourism is an iniquitous form of tourism in which tourists, usually adult males, travel with the intent of sexually exploiting others. I believe it is worth noting that this travel does not necessarily have to be abroad, although it almost always is. Sex tourism may occur domestically; it is the distance travelled and the inherent depraved intentions that define it. I would argue as long as there is a significant distance travelled, this type of sexual exploitation should be considered sex tourism. In the sex tourism model the tourist is aided by networks

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<sup>41</sup> Rojas, Ricardo. "Dominican Court Ruling Renders Hundreds of Thousands Stateless."

<sup>42</sup> Rojas, Ricardo. "Dominican Court Ruling Renders Hundreds of Thousands Stateless."

of travel agencies that cater to this type of service; these agencies are facilitated by the Internet, making it easier than ever for these fiends to plan such trips. The increasingly porous borders of many nations and lack of controls make sex tourism the idyllic situation for pedophiles and registered sex offenders from countries like the United States that closely monitor these offenders' behaviors and whereabouts. Sex tourism enables them to get their fix with relatively low risks for future legal problems.

The Dominican Republic is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking victims. The Dominican Republic is a large source of trafficked persons, particularly women trafficked into prostitution and domestic labor. These women are mainly trafficked to Spain, Austria, Curacao, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Italy, the Netherlands, Panama, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, and Venezuela. In 1996 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found that Dominican women account for 4<sup>th</sup> highest nationality of women working in the international sex industry, with 50% of sex workers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Utrecht coming from the Dominican Republic.<sup>43</sup> According to the United Nations Population Fund, tens of thousands of Dominican women are currently trafficking victims around the world.<sup>44</sup> There is also a large demand within the DR for trafficked Dominican women. According to the 2013 United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report (2013 US-DOS TIP Report), sex tourists arrive year-round from the US, Canada, and Europe in order to sexually exploit local

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<sup>43</sup> Luckoo, F., and M. Tzvetkova. *Combatting Trafficking in Persons: A Directory of Organisations*.

<sup>44</sup> US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report.



children. This sex tourism industry is especially thriving in coastal resort towns. Dominican and foreign workers in the legalized sex trade are especially at risk of being trafficked within the country.<sup>45</sup>

The Dominican Republic is also a destination country for Haitian children trafficked to work in agricultural or domestic labor. The IOM reports that the number of Haitian children trafficked for the purpose of forced begging has increased.

According to the 2013 Global Slavery Index, the Dominican Republic ranks 79<sup>th</sup> out of 162 countries in terms of sheer numbers and in terms of percentage of population.<sup>46</sup> The Index is based on three factors: prevalence of slavery, levels of child marriage, and levels of human trafficking into and out of the country. The Index estimates that of the 10.2 million people living in the Dominican Republic, between 22,000 and 24,000 people are currently enslaved.

The Global Slavery Index calculated the risk of being enslaved in the 162 countries that it studied. The calculation of risk was based off of 33 different indicators that fell under 5 broader categories. The 5 categories were: slavery policy, human rights, development, state stability, and women's rights and discrimination.<sup>47</sup> These factors are illustrated in Appendix B. Appendix C shows how the Index rated Haiti and the Dominican Republic on each of the five risk indicators as well as the overall mean risk in each country.

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<sup>45</sup> *US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report.*

<sup>46</sup> *The Global Slavery Index 2013.*

<sup>47</sup> *The Global Slavery Index 2013.*

## Chapter 6: The Evolving Role of NGOs

Over the past two decades both the roles and the presence of NGOs have greatly evolved and expanded. This is a result of a changing economic and political climate around the world. The global economic trend of the past 20 years has led to an increase of neoliberal policies, which call for a decrease in the role of the state.<sup>48</sup> These policies have pushed for the private sector, including NGOs, to spearhead development initiatives. Political changes have also resulted in a weakening of the state, following the end of leftist parties who focused on the state's centrality in reforming and revolutionizing developmental projects.<sup>49</sup> Not surprisingly, countries with a history of repressive and interventionist regimes are favorably welcoming the increase of NGOs. The growing focus on the idea of "civil society" has led to the belief that NGOs "can both strengthen and help to construct a sphere which will protect society from a return to the intrusive state."<sup>50</sup> This clearly demonstrates the reasons why NGOs

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<sup>48</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 223. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

<sup>49</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 223. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

<sup>50</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 4. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

have experienced such incredible growth in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

This new economic and political climate has created the perfect opening in which NGOs have been able to successfully insert themselves. In recent years governments have been increasingly unable to provide public services to their people. As a result, the size, scope, and number of NGOs have skyrocketed.<sup>51</sup>

Over the past two decades the NGO industry has grown to between 6,000 and 8,000 officially recognized organizations, according to conservative estimates.

<sup>52</sup> The growth of NGOs is apparent in the number of developmental resources they manage and the increasing way in which they influence other organizations involved with development work. The UN estimates that NGOs are responsible for the transfer of \$5 billion in development aid from the North to the South.

However, the principal role of NGOs is not financial, but rather cultural and organizational.<sup>53</sup> NGOs have a wide array of responsibilities, including facilitating the dissemination of information, aiding communication flows, standardizing practices, providing technical knowledge, and creating global values.

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<sup>51</sup> Bradshaw, York W., and Mark J. Schafer. "Urbanization and Development: The Emergence of International Nongovernmental Organizations Amid Declining States." *Sociological Perspectives* 43.1 (2000): 98. Print.

<sup>52</sup> Bradshaw, York W., and Mark J. Schafer. "Urbanization and Development: The Emergence of International Nongovernmental Organizations Amid Declining States." *Sociological Perspectives* 43.1 (2000): 98. Print.

<sup>53</sup> Bradshaw, York W., and Mark J. Schafer. "Urbanization and Development: The Emergence of International Nongovernmental Organizations Amid Declining States." *Sociological Perspectives* 43.1 (2000): 98. Print.

The specific role of NGOs can vary greatly depending on a country's given situation. However, scholars agree unanimously that NGOs have the potential to benefit everyone while also agreeing that NGOs mean different things to different people.<sup>54</sup> The World Bank and other major international organizations recognize that NGOs "may be able to deliver services more efficiently than the State."<sup>55</sup> These organizations envision NGOs as a part of a renewed private sector, with its importance residing in the fact that they are outside of the state, which they hold accountable for the developmental shortcomings of the last twenty years.<sup>56</sup>

On the other hand, scholars such as Mark Schuller believe that NGOs, particularly international NGOs, play a decidedly negative role. Schuller argues that NGOs push globalization in a number of ways, including serving as legitimizers of neoliberal policies, serving as alternatives to struggling Southern governments by undermining them, and presenting a sort of buffer between elites and those they aim to serve, thereby creating institutional barriers against

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<sup>54</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 223. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

<sup>55</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 223. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

<sup>56</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 223. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

local capacity building.<sup>57</sup> Schuller's argument is valid, though a bit extreme.

However, his argument is in line with the idea that NGOs should play a supportive role, aiming to empower governments to be strong enough to provide these services to their people. I believe Schuller is rightly worried that NGOs, particularly those that work on an international scale, may further the proliferation of globalization. This could have detrimental effects on the culture and heritage of the countries in which they operate. This spread of globalization is one of the negative effects of NGOs and in part a major reason why this paper advocates specifically for a local or regional-based NGO approach. This local or regional approach would also circumvent Schuller's concerns about NGOs creating a distance between foreign elites and the people that their organizations strive to serve. Local NGOs or even large international NGOs that are staffed by local personnel have a better knowledge of local issues, and can therefore more successfully address them from a holistic viewpoint that is true to the nation's culture.

Schuller is also concerned with the way in which some NGOs, particularly large international organizations, create high paying jobs for foreign elites and members of the international middle-class.<sup>58</sup> This employment model

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<sup>57</sup> Schuller, Mark. "Gluing Globalization: NGOs as Intermediaries in Haiti." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 32.1 (2009): 85. Print.

<sup>58</sup> Schuller, Mark. "Gluing Globalization: NGOs as Intermediaries in Haiti." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 32.1 (2009): 85. Print.

is inherently discriminatory to the poor populations and educated classes that live in the countries receiving these services, therefore further feeding into the economic inequalities required to maintain the modern neoliberal system. I believe that in order to promote successful long-term economic development and properly counter modern slavery, local peoples must be involved in the process, most notably, through jobs with NGOs. The employment opportunities provided by NGOs, regardless of size, would enable local peoples to become more financially secure, thus leading to a larger consumer class that would strengthen the national economy. Perhaps even more importantly, including local people in this decision-making process would provide local insight into the complex cultural and social layers of the modern slavery issue. These insights would prove incomparable. Perhaps Schuller would argue that local or regional NGOs would not fall outside of these areas of concerns because they are often funded by the very international organizations that he is concerned with; however, if local people are empowered enough to be a part of this decision-making process and are in leadership positions within these organizations, they will be in a place where they have some form of power to be heard by their financiers.

One of the major debates surrounding NGOs concerns the ways in which they should operate and what duties are appropriate for them. There is a fine line between the areas in which NGOs should work and those in which the state must remain the responsible provider. According to Jenny Pearce, the main

challenge that NGOs must face is creating “sustainable social processes” from the bottom up, thus guaranteeing real grassroots empowerment.<sup>59</sup> The purpose of this bottom-up approach is to ensure that the poor and powerless members of society have the ability to identify their needs and interests, thus allowing them to be included in policy and decision-making processes. Inclusions of poor and marginalized factions of society in this way are essential to create sustainable and meaningful change. However, today many NGOs are less focused on this form of capacity building and inclusion and more focused on bringing about such changes themselves, without the voice of the people. This is largely a result of the fact that many NGOs came into being during a time in which they were expected to help bring about the “structural political change” that the major donors were requiring as a condition of their development financing.<sup>60</sup> This led to a primary focus on institutional change through and by NGOs, not the affected marginalized peoples. This resulted in an exclusion of women, hierarchical decision-making processes within NGOs, and a habit of institutionalizing NGOs rather than the very people they were designed to help.

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<sup>59</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 226. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

<sup>60</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 226. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.

Although political change remains an important objective, NGOs must first and foremost focus on building the capacity of the local populations that they serve. If they are too heavily focused on improving their own efficiency or technical capabilities, they will neglect their intended grassroots initiatives and fail to help the people they seek to serve in a lasting and successful way. Involving local populations is critical to establishing lasting benefits because the local people know what is best for their communities and they have the insight of history. They know best what has and hasn't worked for them. Their firsthand knowledge of their community's needs cannot be undervalued, let alone pushed aside in favor of outsiders' (NGOs) prerogatives. Such moves can be viewed as imperialistic and could strain future NGO-community relations.

Many scholars have noted the changing way in which NGOs have behaved in the past two decades. In his "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State," John Clark notes that the Technical Age's focus on creating and implementing projects is an outdated approach that must give way to an "Information Age," which is focused on communication, lobbying, and research.

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<sup>61</sup> Pearce, Jenny. "NGOs and Social Change: Agents or Facilitators?" *Development in Practice* 3.3 (1993): 226. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029270?ref=search-gateway:7f6d0b89e5ce418825994d228ef9d383>>.



<sup>62</sup> Clark further posits that these informational transfers are in fact more important to NGOs in the Global South than the funds that they receive from their counterparts in the Global North. <sup>63</sup> Although these information-sharing methods contribute to further collaboration and therefore likely result in increased efficiency, funds will remain a central concern for NGOs based in the Global South until they have the capacity to become financially independent. This again highlights the need for big international NGOs to assist smaller local or regional NGOs based in the Global South in becoming self-sufficient and self-sustainable. Any allusion to the concept that Southern NGOs are dependent on information-sharing techniques is at serious risk of falling into the category of an imperialistic savior's complex. Many Southern NGOs in fact have the necessary skill set to self-organize and execute projects; however, without proper funding they cannot succeed on their own.

The booming presence of NGOs resulted from a shift in the global political realm, which decreased the influential role of states. In consequence, the relationships between NGOs and states is uniquely uncharted territory, which varies greatly depending on the context of a given state or sector. In some states, such as Haiti, NGOs have virtually replaced the state. In others, like the

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<sup>62</sup> Clark, John. "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State." *Development in Practice* 2.3 (1992): 151. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029039?ref=search-gateway:b058cee4a603f9987595a10a8519e168>>.

<sup>63</sup> Clark, John. "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State." *Development in Practice* 2.3 (1992): 151. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029039?ref=search-gateway:b058cee4a603f9987595a10a8519e168>>.

Dominican Republic, NGOs and the state work more in tandem. Given the inherent complexity of the fact that the current boom of NGOs resulted from a diminishing role of the state, it can easily be understood why NGOs and states would be reluctant to work side-by-side. As Clark highlighted, NGOs cannot function as alternative sources of development; they simply cannot replace the state and the services that it provides. Clark writes, "NGO projects are important, but they do not by themselves provide solutions to problems on a national scale." <sup>64</sup>

Smart NGOs are aware of this need for collaboration or, at the very least, cooperation. As a result, they are beginning to situate themselves within the larger political spectrum, so as to spread their influence. As NGOs gain awareness and realize it is in their best self-interest to integrate into the political world, they have three options, according to Clark: oppose, complement, or reform the state. <sup>65</sup> Opposing the state is neither in the interest of NGOs nor the people that they serve. Complementing the state allows both parties to work in their best interests and is most beneficial for the people they serve.

This paper will compare two NGOs that work towards combatting

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<sup>64</sup> Clark, John. "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State." *Development in Practice* 2.3 (1992): 152. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029039?ref=search-gateway:b058cee4a603f9987595a10a8519e168>>.

<sup>65</sup> Clark, John. "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State." *Development in Practice* 2.3 (1992): 152. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4029039?ref=search-gateway:b058cee4a603f9987595a10a8519e168>>.

modern slavery in Haiti and the Dominican Republic: Beyond Borders in Haiti, which addresses the *rèstavek* system, and the Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN), which addresses the exploited aspects of the commercial sex industry in the Dominican Republic. Both organizations cooperate and, in some cases, collaborate with the respective states in which they work. This is likely why they have been successful in aiding victims, protecting vulnerable persons from being victimized in the future, and drawing State attention to the issues. These organizations have collaborated with the states through information sharing programs and the provision of victims' aid and services. They have also implemented educational initiatives that the states may not have provided due to a lack of resources. The information and strategies pioneered by these organizations enabled states to tailor their policies to be more successful and comprehensive.

## **Chapter 7: Haiti: A Case Study**

This section will focus on an NGO, Beyond Borders, working in Haiti to combat the *rèstavek* practice. My analysis of Beyond Borders will draw heavily on information obtained from my interview with Country Director Meagan Silencieux. Beyond Borders has been working to end child slavery in Haiti since 1993. Through an extensive network of partnerships Beyond Borders works to address both the rural and urban sides of the *rèstavek* system. They have established partnerships with “Haitian grassroots leaders, government officials,

community based organizations, parents and adult survivors of child slavery.”

Beyond Borders’ work addresses the root causes that perpetuate the practice of *rèstavek*, including extreme poverty and the cultural norms surrounding child labor, abuse, and slave-like practices. In addition to raising awareness to address the problem, Beyond Borders works to empower communities to take action to stop the practice of *rèstavek*. The organization operates under the ideology that the Haitian people know best how to address issues within Haiti; thus, they seek to provide Haitian activists with the tools and resources that they need to make change and begin grassroots movements themselves.

Beyond Borders works to address the *rèstavek* system in both rural sending communities and urban receiving areas. Rural strategies are focused on providing education, raising awareness, building networks, and encouraging empowerment. Additionally there is a heavy focus on preventative measures that target vulnerable populations. Beyond Borders operates an Accelerated Education program that identifies vulnerable groups of children and provides them with education, particularly older uneducated students. Education programs also provide payment for teachers, making the profession a viable financial option. They also provide books and funding for students and classroom resources.

Awareness initiatives include dialogues based on the “Education is a Conversation” (ESK) curriculum with adults that focus on taboo subjects such as corporal punishment, sexual abuse, and the practice of *rèstavek*. The ESK program is based on a series of five books that were compiled based on

information obtained from several thousand interviews.<sup>66</sup> This educational model is specifically made for Haitians, by Haitians. It has been successful because it draws upon the social and community-based nature of Haitian culture. Moreover, it is inclusive because it does not require participants to be literate. After completing the twenty-two week ESK program, participants become neighborhood Child Rights Activists. Beyond Borders has trained over 1,600 Child Rights Activists in southeastern Haiti since 2010. This awareness-building model flows into network building initiatives.

Trained Child Rights Advocates work together in Child Protection Committees, which act as the “designated protectors and defenders of kids” in their communities.<sup>67</sup> These committees serve on the frontlines, upholding human rights in local neighborhoods. This model draws upon the cultural importance of community in Haitian society by creating a system in which neighbors are able to hold one another accountable for their treatment of children. The Child Protection Advocates become the people who receive training and support from the organizations and its partners. This training enables them to interact more effectively with the state. Beyond Borders has already launched 43 Child Protection Committees and has plans to launch 53 more by the end of 2013.

The last platform of Beyond Borders’ anti-trafficking efforts is empowering locals. The School Gardens program teaches farming and

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<sup>66</sup> Silencieux, Meagan. "Beyond Borders Interview." Personal interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

<sup>67</sup> Silencieux, Meagan. "Beyond Borders Interview." Personal interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

agricultural skills to kids that cultivate produce to be used in school lunches. The excess crops are sold in local markets and the profits go towards funding schools. This type of vocational training was a common feature of all the NGOs I interviewed while in Haiti. Even the Institut du Bien-Être (Ministry of Social Welfare) stressed the importance of vocational training as a means to prevent reentry into vulnerability or future exploitation. These programs aim to include vulnerable populations in the formal economic sector, thus building a stronger and more developed national economy that supports human rights.

Beyond Borders also hosts Teacher Training programs that emphasize the importance of nonviolent and participatory teaching methods. Teacher Training encourages active participation and small group discussion in order to encourage students to share their opinions, rather than learning passively. The School Gardens and Teacher Training programs are a part of Beyond Borders' Schools Alive network. Schools Alive is a network of schools instructing over 6,000 students in rural areas. The goal of Schools Alive is to strengthen schools in rural areas in order to help vulnerable communities thrive and keep children out of slavery by removing the necessity or appeal of the *rèstavek* system from the supply side.

Beyond Borders employs several urban strategies in its efforts to combat the practice of *rèstavek*. These strategies closely mirror those employed in rural areas. They are: raise awareness, build networks, and encouraging empowerment. Beyond Borders helped to name November 17<sup>th</sup> as the National Day to End the *Rèstavek* Practice. Beyond Borders also raises awareness through radio

discussions, highlighting the dangers r  staveks face as well as the adult responsibility to protect children and report abuses.

The ESK and Child Protection Committees programs also operate in urban centers. In urban areas they work from the other end of the spectrum, educating families with r  staveks or families who know people with r  staveks. This initiative aims to educate people on how to treat children in a respectful manner. The urban aspects of the educational program seek to change cultural attitudes to make them more in line with human rights. There is a colloquial Kreyol saying, “timoun se b  t,” which refers to an idea that children do not develop a consciousness before a certain age. In that pre-conscious state children are considered to be like animals, thus justifying their mistreatment. After these educational programs conclude, Beyond Borders employs the Most Significant Change tool, which has participants self-assess the area in which they most profoundly changed. According to Meagan Silencieux, the most common response is a generalized deepened respect for children and their treatment as human beings. This goes to show that the workshops are successfully countering culturally ingrained perceptions of abuse and mistreatment of children.

At the network building level, Beyond Borders has created an Adult Survivor Network. The Adult Survivor Network brings adult survivors together to start a dialogue to overcome the stigma associated with having served as a r  stavek. The network also aims to empower these survivors to speak out about the harms of the r  stavek practice. Efforts to empower the survivors in the Adult Survivor Network are currently under expansion. Current empowerment programs

include working in conjunction with Haitian NGOs and government institutions to strengthen their ability to respond to reports of vulnerable children and children already serving as *rèstaveks*.

Beyond Borders has worked with Haitian government officials to revise their current response policies. For example, President Michel Martelly recently implemented a free education program, which provides free education to Haitian children that have never attended school and are under the age of 12.<sup>68</sup> Beyond Borders saw the gaps in this program in that it did not cater to *rèstavek* children because many of them are over-age or they have been to school sporadically. This essentially barred them from receiving free education that would enable them to better their futures. Beyond Borders worked with the government to bring back the accelerated primary education program that it spearheaded years ago in hopes of addressing this educational gap in *rèstavek* children. The program enables over-aged children to complete their primary education in three years so they can then enter classrooms with peers their own age. This allows freed *rèstavek* children to gain skills that will help them succeed and give them a sense of normalcy. Beyond Borders also works with a variety of other organizations with similar missions, including the Vulnerable Children's Working Group, Ministry of Justice's Committee on Justice for Minors, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Committee on Child Slavery.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Silencieux, Meagan. "Beyond Borders Interview." Personal interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

<sup>69</sup> "Ending Child Slavery." Beyond Borders



## Chapter 8: The Dominican Republic: A Case Study

This section will focus on the Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN). COIN is an NGO working in the Dominican Republic to counter forced prostitution. COIN was established on November 28, 1988 in the Dominican Republic. COIN is one of many NGOs currently working in the Dominican Republic to improve the condition of marginalized groups through grassroots efforts. COIN came about in response to the growing issues of human trafficking and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Since it was established, COIN has worked to implement educational and preventative programs in the context of healthcare.

Additionally, COIN combats social discrimination against marginalized groups through the implementation of innovative programs and strategies in order to empower them.<sup>70</sup> COIN's initiatives emphasize the importance of integrating vulnerable groups into society while working to properly identify their needs so as to implement the best policies and practices. COIN works in 8 major areas: Women, Gender, Migration, Trafficking in Persons, Youth, Transsexual Population, Sex Workers, and Human Rights.<sup>71</sup> COIN actively contributes to

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<sup>70</sup> "Sobre Nosotros." *Centro De Orientación E Investigación Integral, Inc.* COIN, n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2014.  
<[http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en](http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en)>.

<sup>71</sup> "Objetivos Estratégicos." *Centro De Orientación E Investigación Integral, Inc.* COIN, n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2014.  
<[http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en](http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en)>.

efforts aimed at preventing the social, economic, and health-related factors which fuel the sex industry, irregular migration, and the trafficking of Dominican women both domestically and abroad. In addition to preventative measures, COIN offers training, information, and medical, psychological, and legal services to survivors.<sup>72</sup>

COIN is a member of the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), whose mission is to “ensure that the human rights of all migrating women are respected and protected by authorities and agencies.”<sup>73</sup> The GAATW is an alliance of over 100 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world. The NGO member organizations represent a diverse range of subjects, including: migrant rights, anti-trafficking, self-organized groups of migrant workers, domestic workers, survivors of trafficking, sex workers, human rights and women's rights organizations, and direct service providers.<sup>74</sup> The GAATW believes that the growing issue of human trafficking is fundamentally entrenched in the framework of migration for labor. As a result, they strongly advocate for the protection of migrant rights, within the context of the globalized labor market,

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<sup>72</sup> "Objetivos Estratégicos." *Centro De Orientación E Investigación Integral, Inc.* COIN, n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2014.  
<[http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en](http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en)>.

<sup>73</sup> "Mission." *Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women.* GAATW, n.d. Web. 2 Mar. 2014.  
<[http://www.gaatw.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=46](http://www.gaatw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=46)>.

<sup>74</sup> "About Us." *Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women.* G, n.d. Web. 2 Mar. 2014.  
<[http://www.gaatw.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=2&Itemid=2](http://www.gaatw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=2&Itemid=2)>.

and for increased safety standards to safeguard migrants moving both informally and formally to various work sectors.

The GAATW believes that safe migration and labor should be at the heart of all anti-trafficking initiatives. They advocate for safe living and working conditions that provide women with more options in their countries of origin. In addition, they educate women on migration, working conditions, and their rights. The GAATW encourages the implementation of the supplementary Trafficking Protocol to the *United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime*. The GAATW works to support and share best practices while also being vocal about practices and policies that are negatively affecting trafficked persons, migrants, and other vulnerable populations. The GAATW attempts to work closely in conjunction with its partners and member organizations to implement a strategic agenda that is centered upon migrant rights.

Today COIN continues working to empower vulnerable populations, provide access to healthcare, and assist survivors of trafficking and forced prostitution. Its original mission has expanded to focus on research and supporting other organizations that work to serve vulnerable populations.<sup>75</sup> COIN is enormously collaborative, working to protect and aid current sex workers and survivors of trafficking through joint initiatives with organizations such as Aura de Esperanza and the Movimiento de Mujeres Unidas (MODEMU).

The Aura de Esperanza program, also referred to by its much longer name,

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<sup>75</sup> "Sobre Nosotros." *Centro De Orientación E Investigación Integral, Inc.* COIN, n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2014.  
<[http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en](http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=67&lang=en)>.

“Establishing Public Policy and Local Prevention Models on Trafficking and Comprehensive Care for Women and Youth,” operates under the directive of COIN. It works to promote international and national conversations concerning human trafficking with an added emphasis on violence against women and youth. Aura de Esperanza operates with the understanding that violations of human rights negatively impact development programs. The end goal of Aura de Esperanza is to create comprehensive local policies and a national plan to address the issue of trafficking within the next three years.<sup>76</sup> The program has three major parts: prevention, victim assistance, and empowering sex workers. Prevention efforts include research and classification of information, expanding the national strategy, campaigning to raise awareness about the scope and size of the problem, and working to strengthen institutions through training programs. Victim assistance programs aim to establish a clear set of standards for protection; provide immediate and comprehensive assistance, housing, medical, psychological, and legal support; and aid in the return and reintegration of victims.

Empowering sex workers to speak for themselves is imperative in ensuring that sex workers are not exploited. The Dominican Republic’s policy of legalized prostitution blurs the lines of what is acceptable behavior and treatment of sex workers; thus, it is essential that sex workers are empowered and educated to be aware of their rights, personal worth, and the resources available to them. To

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<sup>76</sup> "Aura De Esperanza." *Aura De Esperanza*. COIN, n.d. Web. 03 Mar. 2014. <[http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=56%3Aaura-de-esperanza&catid=62%3Atrata-y-traffic&Itemid=62&lang=en](http://www.coin.org.do/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=56%3Aaura-de-esperanza&catid=62%3Atrata-y-traffic&Itemid=62&lang=en)>.

empower sex workers, Aura de Esperanza has worked to integrate 70% of sex workers to organize under the MODEMU and develop a plan for education and action, which highlights gender as a major factor in empowerment. Aura de Esperanza hopes to achieve these ends by providing lab tests, training and educational programs, access to loans, home visits, and information through a toll-free number, among other things.

MODEMU is an NGO in the Dominican Republic, which is comprised of current and former Dominican sex workers working both internationally and domestically.<sup>77</sup> Its main goals are to promote the human rights of commercial sex workers (particularly health, social, and labor rights), to combat trafficking, and to promote the human rights of trafficked Dominican women that have returned home. MODEMU also provides workshops to educate women on issues of gender equality, fair wages and work conditions, and health and safety within the context of the sex industry. MODEMU works closely with COIN to host workshops and distribute educational materials for sex workers and the general public to learn safe sex practices. The two also collaborate on a newsletter.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

### ***Better Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Modern Slavery***

In order to be most effective, NGOs must collaborate with states to

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<sup>77</sup> "MODEMU." *Movimiento De Mujeres Unidas*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Mar. 2014. <[http://www.gaatw.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=505:modemu&catid=124:Latin+American+Countries](http://www.gaatw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=505:modemu&catid=124:Latin+American+Countries)>.

address issues of modern slavery. First and foremost, the ability of NGOs to operate within the borders of sovereign nations is a privilege that can easily be revoked. It is essential that NGOs bear this in mind, particularly those that operate in states with a history of foreign occupation and imperialism, such as Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Of course NGOs do have the option to oppose states, as highlighted by John Clark in “Democratising Development: NGOs and the State.” However, this is counterintuitive to the goals of their missions. If NGOs are removed from these states, they will no longer be able to help the populations they seek to serve. Collaborating with states allows NGOs to fulfill their directives while respecting and strengthening local institutions.

The collaboration that should exist between NGOs and governments is a two-way street: NGOs are on the ground and are able to see flaws in government initiatives, while the government has the experience and cultural understanding of what policies will succeed in their countries. The two must, therefore, play to each other’s strengths.

NGO collaboration and NGO-led efforts towards governmental capacity building are also play a key role in the permanent eradication of modern slavery. Currently NGOs play a pivotal role in assisting developing states. If they continue to work collaboratively with the goal of eventually stepping back, they will empower the governments to stand on their own. Stable states that have the ability to provide services that meet the basic needs of their people are

absolutely imperative in reducing the population of vulnerable persons that end up in modern slavery. Eliminating the supply will drive up the prices of slaves and make slave labor a less profitable industry, thereby reducing the appeal altogether.

Finally, collaboration between NGOs and governments can further strengthen democracy by building confidence in governmental organs. For example, the microcredit program implemented by the Institut du Bien-Être is working towards increasing the financial capacity of Haiti's poorest. In doing so the people touched by this program are learning to trust state institutions. This sort of political and institutional confidence is crucial for the development and long-term stability of all countries.

### ***How to Make a Difference: Ensuring a Free Future for All***

Certainly combatting modern slavery is not an easy task. It requires complex multilevel coordination and global cooperation. This is made even more difficult when considering the fact that many policy-makers, government officials, and ordinary citizens can't even come to an agreement on how to define or conceptualize modern slavery.

Initially, there must be more stringent monitoring practices enacted to ensure that businesses uphold internationally accepted human rights standards. The boom of neoliberal policies and economic globalization over the past few decades has led to a push for ever-increasing profits. Increasing profits requires

decreasing production costs; this can easily be done by drastically cutting labor costs, the extreme being the use of free labor provided by slaves. The neoliberal system has not been purely negative; in fact, it has facilitated unprecedented economic growth and modernization and has improved the lives of many. However, these positives cannot overshadow the ways the world's poor have been taken advantage of. Today's business practices operate with a philosophy of "my job is to get the best deal, I can't worry about local problems."<sup>78</sup> These attitudes show the selfish nature of the modern moneygrubbing society that we live in. In order to protect human rights while ensuring continued modernization and global economic growth, it is essential that governments step in to implement and enforce labor standards. They cannot simply allow the market to protect and improve the lives of all people.

Furthermore, eradicating slavery will require a major shift in attitudes and sensitivities. Many people actively distance themselves from global problems, viewing them as distant issues that do not affect them or complexities that they can't do anything about. These attitudes must change. When people's outlooks become more empathetic and the majority is able to fully value all human beings, social movements to end slavery will expand and succeed.

The end of modern slavery is important not simply because freedom is a

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<sup>78</sup> Bales, Kevin. "Chapter 7: What Can Be Done?" *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*. Berkeley, CA: U of California, 1999. 236. Print.



fundamental human right, but also because freedom fosters stability and stability in turn fosters development. Slaves and escaped slaves are often distanced from the formal economic sector, limiting their ability to make a living and contribute to the greater good. Escaped slaves often end up on the streets due to a lack of schooling and knowledge of the resources available to them. While on the streets they frequently become involved in illegal activities such as petty theft or gang membership. These illegal activities present obstacles to security, which, in kind, have serious ramifications for the future of the country, such as deterring foreign investment and tourism and posing risks to the safety of other citizens. Freedom allows all people, regardless of their skills, gender, race, or any factor, to participate in the formal economy. A strong formal labor force is a major component of positive development.

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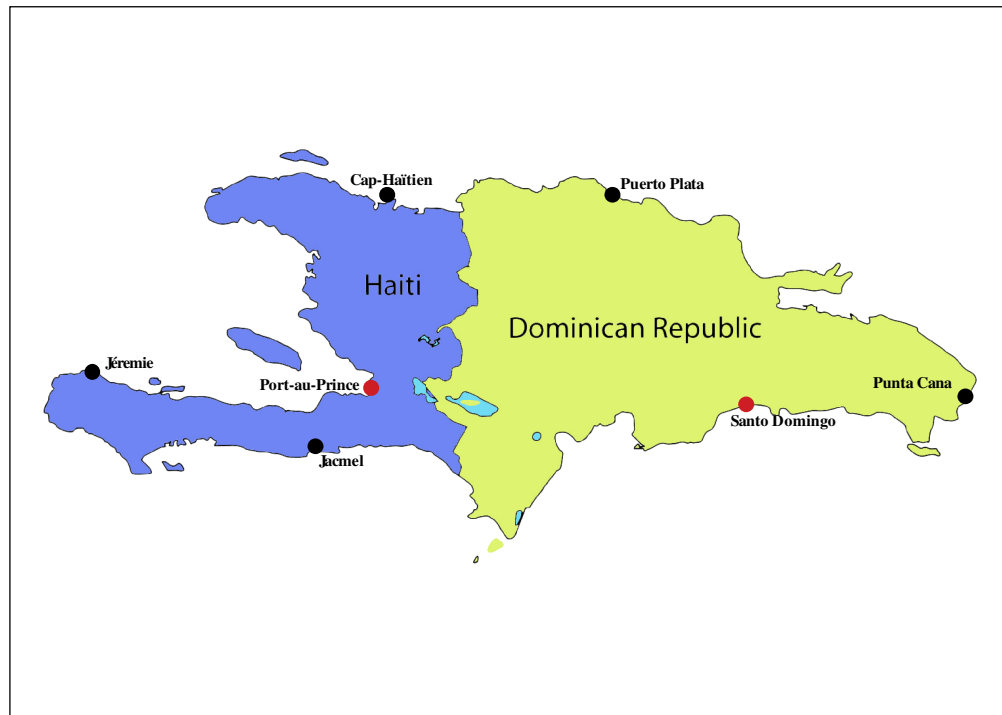
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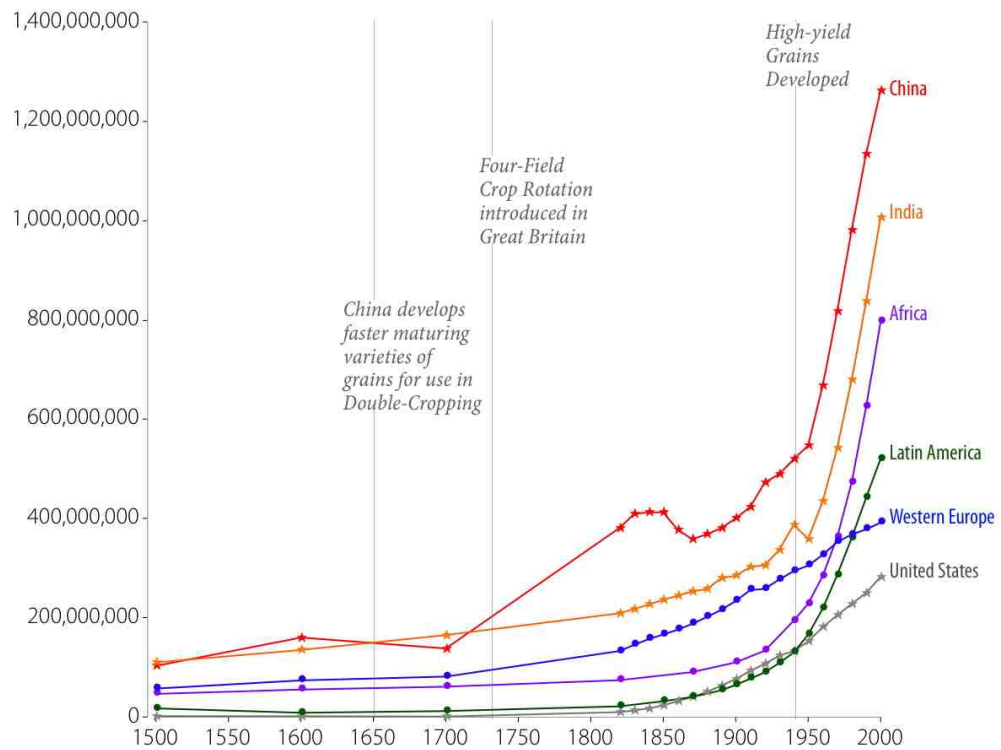
## Appendix A Map of Relevant Cities



## Appendix B

### Population Growth over the Last 500 Years

China, India, Africa, Latin America, Western Europe, and United States



Source: Angus Maddison, University of Groningen

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## Appendix C

### *Risks Index for the Dominican Republic & Haiti*

<i>Category of Risk</i>	<i>Dominican Republic</i>	<i>Haiti</i>
<i>Slavery Policy</i>	43.43	61.11
<i>Human Rights</i>	36.93	49.93
<i>Development</i>	39.89	80.11
<i>State Stability</i>	61.25	65.16
<i>Women's Rights &amp; Discrimination</i>	53.19	74.11
<i>Overall Mean Risk</i>	46.94	66.08

## Appendix D

### *Risk Factors for Trafficking*

<i>Slavery Policy</i>	<i>Human Rights</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>State Stability</i>	<i>Women's Rights &amp; Discrimination</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevention, protection, prosecution measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to legal &amp; property rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to financial services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Gini coefficient</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Law enforcement training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil liberties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cell phone users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's economic &amp; political rights</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migration regulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freedom of assembly, religion, &amp; speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Credit information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independence of judiciary</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labor monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political &amp; worker's rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GDP-PPP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace Index</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parallel legal systems</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Development Index</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political instability</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Debt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violent crime</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to weapons</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy</li> </ul>		



- Social safety net

## **Appendix E**

### **Interview Transcripts**

#### ***Transcript 1***

**Name:** Ester; Lovely; Mariange

**Job Title:** Field Program Coordinator (Ester); Student Coordinators (Lovely and Mariange)

**Organization:** Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice (FOPJ)

**Date:** March 13, 2014

**Translated By:** Carla Bluntschli

**Schneider:** What is the general work of FOPJ?

**Ester:** There are different programs that we operate. There is one part that's called Foyer Esperance and it's for the rèstavek children. It's the school over there. And then there's the part that's called Peace Education, which has the professional – or vocational – center. It's the Oscar Romero center; he was a priest who was killed for his revolutionary ideas. And we support women and young girls, young women, who have had babies who are single. We give them training. We also have a center for young men who are very vulnerable because they're on the streets and very poor. Then there is another program that we have which is Sharing Solidarity. So this is for elderly people who have been basically abandoned by their families; they don't have any family or the means to help them at all so we try to do something every month. The old people, they walk, I mean they carry water up to the top of this mountain. I am the Field Program

Coordinator. So after the earthquake we decided to not just have rèstavek, now we have 80% rèstavek and 20% of those who just don't have any means; they don't have a mother or father to support them, just really a real bad situation.

[Introduces Lovely and Mariange] They basically run the programs so they can talk to you more.

**Lovely:** I am like the principal for the pedagogy of the center. I am also responsible for the whole cultural program for the center. We like to continue the programs even after participants finish their grade school. We like to continue with them; it's not a real program, but it's like a follow-up on the kids who finish here. We do like a monitoring with them after they finish the program. We meet with them on Saturdays to do different activities with them here at the center, like dance, music, keep up with them – keep in touch with them.

**Mariange:** I work with Lovely. We have a club for the older students so we can talk to them a lot about their problems and so we can get closer to them. We go into the children's homes and where they're living to see how they're getting along. So there are 200 children here and 50 in another home. So we motivated the families, the foster family or the parents, to treat the children well.

### *Transcript 2*

**Name:** Meagan Silencieux  
**Job Title:** Country Director (Haiti)  
**Organization:** Beyond Borders  
**Date:** March 10, 2014

**Schneider:** You were talking about your partners...

**Silencieux:** We have two primary partners that working in the context of *rèstavek* in Haiti. One is working from an urban context here in Port-au-Prince and the other is working in the countryside in the south, in Jacmel, and in surrounding rural remote communities in the mountains across twelve different communities.

**Schneider:** When did you begin working for Beyond Borders?

**Silencieux:** I started almost two years ago in September of 2012. So I'm newer with the organization but I've been here in Haiti awhile.

**Schneider:** What drew you to this line of work?

**Silencieux:** I don't know. People always ask that. Like I said I'd been working here in Haiti for a while already. What I like [about Beyond Borders] is that they don't have a conventional approach to things. They're not interested in kind of hosting mission trips or whatever. They're really interested in a way of being in partnership that's not dominant narrative thinking, that is proprietary, and that, you know, that objectifies Haitians. I think you struggle with that so that it's an authentic process all the time but they struggle with that in a good way that impresses me a lot. And I continue to wrestle with it. I like that.

**Schneider:** What did you do before you worked with Beyond Borders?

**Silencieux:** Before I worked for Beyond Borders, before I moved to Haiti, I worked for a large Canadian NGO similar to the World Food Program, but doing public engagement and education work, so I travelled a lot in Latin America and the Caribbean but doing work with farmers, mostly food security and sovereignty stuff, but I had a long background in cultural adaptation and facilitating exchange

experiences. So, um, I had already been on that track a little bit but also, just yeah, it was mostly agricultural work before then, but I had experience from a Canadian perspective looking at the impact of large kind of governmental organizations that distribute money to projects through partners, through grassroots partnerships around the world. I had visited Haiti and other places.

**Schneider:** What does your job at Beyond Borders entail on a daily basis, or is there a typical day?

**Silencieux:** No. Um, my job because I'm the only, we have one other staff person who is technical support placed to a specific program and so she doesn't work on child's issues and responding to and preventing violence against women and girls and more largely a global objective to reduce their vulnerability to, um, HIV/AIDS. And she's someone who has worked with this program with the methodology that has been adapted from Uganda for Haiti. So she lives in Jacmel and works specifically with that program and is kind of the liaison between all of our partner programs and our head office, which is in Washington. So we're kind of an investing partner in the partners here in Haiti, that are implementing the work.

So I do a lot of administrative [work] – doing the budget, looking at log frames\*<sup>80</sup>, and working with partners to make sure their monitoring and evaluation practices are helpful to them, not just kind of, you know, ridiculous hoops to jump through but things that help to inform what they're doing in the

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<sup>80</sup> \*Unclear audio – I have made my best guess as to what was said

field is actual effective and is it meaningful measurements or not? Um, so I do a lot more hands on technical support with our partners.

I also do miscellaneous communications work. You know, I do interviews and films and stuff, I host visitors like yourself. Sometimes we have major donors or representatives from foundations. This week I'm hosting one of our board members, who's a professor at Howard University in Washington. He's coming with a group of like 25 students on an alternative spring break. Um, so I'm really, I'm a really like polivana,\*<sup>81</sup> as you say in French, like multitasking kind of job, which is great. So there's no typical day.

**Schneider:** So what are the most important factors in helping victims of the *rèstavek* system cope after they're rescued?

**Silencieux:** Well, um, maybe. The work that we do, well I don't know, maybe it makes sense to talk about the work that our partners are doing to kind of give you a primer before that. The Child Protection Team that we have in Port-au-Prince, works, they're on a protection place in that scale of work, also in the countryside.

So there are two partners, Child Protection Team here and Fondasyon Limyè Lavi, which is in Jacmel. So both of them are working at eliminating the system of *rèstavek*, but from two opposite ends. In the countryside they are working to reduce, the, like, vulnerable families' likelihood that they're going to send their kids away. So the idea that, you know, families are vulnerable to send their kids away because they don't have enough money either to feed them or to send them to school. So to do some work in those rural areas around, both of these

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<sup>81</sup> \*Unclear audio – here I have made my best guess as to what was said

two partners I should say use the same tool to raise awareness in different contexts, it's called "Education as a Conversation" and in Kreyol it's an acronym that's ESK.

These are a series of five books that were developed before I came along; that was Cathy Cash stuff. They did several thousand interviews with adult survivors of *rèstavek* to get a handle on what kind of common experiences are. Out of these thousands of interviews came these five books, each on sexual violence, on physical violence, emotional abuse, and then, um, alternative emerging models of discipline, um, how an adult can be a different kind of example or a witness to how to be in a healthy relationship with children. The last two books are about that, the exact titles are a little bit out of my head at the moment.

But these books are, it's a popular education model so this means that you don't have to know how to read to use them. It's an inclusive dialogue format. So people come in each community where they work, either in the countryside or in the city. A group of 20 to no more than 30 people who self-identify as wanting to participate under the guise of "I want to learn more about child rights, I want to learn more about general mistreatment or abuse of children, and how to be a defender of children." So they're full of images and the facilitators are trained to move people through these stories in a way that, like I said, they don't often know how to read or have been to school, it helps if you have, but it's a process where people are engaged to react to the content, to the stories. They read them out loud,

they do role-plays, and move through different subject[s]. Like children who are... I should have brought some of them.

They are, for me they're still really hard to look at because they're really graphic and, um, there's lots of groups working with them. So people really feel it and they really kind of enter into the story. So if they're reading a story about some adults who are watching someone beat a child in public and "what would you do if you were this market woman who was watching and how do you move through that? Or students who are being beaten in school."

Over the course of six months it's designed to move attitudes that are culturally inherent in Haiti but not permanent. So the idea that, one that if Carla's over here and she's beating her child my first reaction is not to intervene or to say anything, for a number of reasons and it's not because I don't care or because I'm a bad person or because I believe that's the right way. It's because it's not culturally appropriate and it might actually put me at risk. So it's being below that kind of behavioral things, so like what are the cultural roots of inaction around this and, um, they're doing great kind of testing the rural and city environments and how that changes attitudes over time. And it has a really long lasting effect.

So it's a six-month program where people go through this. Following that, each group has gone through these dialogues, this six-month dialogue-based program, we'll construct a community, like neighborhood's child protection committee. And then, they develop their many, many groups that have happened all across the specific area[s]. They will each send representatives to a regional committee. So then they, you know that in each community there's a group of

people who are kind of the designated protectors and defenders of kids. And they become the go-to people, who the Foundation in the south and Child Protection here in Port-au-Prince, provide ongoing training and support to so they can teach them things like how to interact with the state better, if there's a situation where there's actually a family that needs to refer to Child Welfare or the police need to be involved, who are the necessary connection points in the government and over time they become, you know, they're the go-to people. I don't know, do you have Block Parents in the U.S.?

**Schneider:** Do we have what?

**Silencieux:** Block Parents. In Canada we have some like families who go through a training and they're given a sign by the government to put in your window. And all the kids in school are trained to know that if you're ever in trouble this is a place you can go to. It's a kind of community reputation, kind of is developed for these people. So it works in much the same way in the city, just that sometimes they're working with community-based organizations, not necessarily just a group of people. But, again, there are 16 pilot communities right now in Port-au-Prince and there are 12 larger community groups in the southeast, but we're talking thousands of people now who have been trained with this methodology.

So the difference in the people who are participating in these dialogue groups, in the countryside it's mostly families, right? The people who are being moved and transformed by this education work are moms and dads who either sent their kids away already or might be tempted to. Or they are neighbors of people like that. Here in the city they are more likely families who know *rèstavek*



kids in their neighbor or who may even have them in their home. So one is the prevention of sending kids; the other is, you know, changing the level of understanding around how to treat children who are in your home. And sometimes, in some cases, inspiring the process of sending them home. Does that make sense? I just talked a lot. Do you have any questions?

**Schneider:** No, that was very informative. I read a little bit about how sometimes, I guess the nature of the *rèstavek* system isn't necessarily bad in theory, it's just that it is often abused. So when you were talking about how you're educating people that might have *rèstaveks* in their homes, sometimes does that just help so that they are treated better?

**Silencieux:** Well I'm not sure for every organization that is working on this issue; but our partners, they don't say that every child who doesn't live with their families is a *rèstavek*, because it sells the strong sense in the culture here of solidarity and responsibility to family way short. Not every child that, like, lots of people you know, you have family and they say "I have family back there, family *an dey'o* [Kreyol]." And they do. A lot of people do take in their sisters, auntie's, whoever's kids, cousins, and they love them and they treat them well and you would never know that that's not their biological child.

So just to be clear that for us and our partners, a *rèstavek* is a child that does not live at home and is not treated with the same standard of love and care as the other kids. They may go to school, but in the worse case scenario they don't go to school. They don't have the same eating and shelter kind of situation as the other kids. Very often, in the worst-case scenario, they don't have a bed. They

may eat whatever they can dig out of dishes that's left; they're not served an actual meal. Like this is worst-case scenario. There's some kids who, uh, do way more work than all the other kids in the house but there's other kids who do work too. But the worst-case scenario is they're treated as a slave. Um, the other kids in the house they don't do any work, they all go to school, they all have someone to help them do their lessons, and this is the kid who gets up in the morning and goes and gets water for all the other kids in the house to have a bath. You'll see them walking the other kids to school, carrying their bags even if the other child is older than them. Um, that's who we're concerned with. Just to be sure. I feel like sometimes people just ignore that definition and I just, for us it's not balanced enough in terms of the culture here because their culture isn't a hateful one, one that isn't necessarily disrespectful. Does that make sense?

**Schneider:** Yeah. What kinds of reintegration methods does Beyond Borders use to aid survivors?

**Silencieux:** Ok. They're not directly involved in integration work, although because of their direct involvement with people in communities and learning about this we do have staff people in the Child Protection Team in Port-au-Prince that work in, uh, intersectoral, kind of intergovernmental roundtables around different policies the government is creating around that. I'm not directly involved in that work and won't even pretend to speak to the details of it.

The work that they do with survivors is that when they go into these communities, in cities for example, and they do the six-month process, the dialogue work. You'll see, like I said, these stories are graphic and they're heavy

and it touches everyone but the facilitators are trained to identify people who may...you may be reopening trauma for them because this is an experience that they have lived and so every community they go to, they're finding there are adults who in the beginning don't identify but they know they are and over a process of time they will come to then self-identify.

So the Child Protection Team here in Port-au-Prince works with, now they have a network of, I think they're at 75 this year, adult survivors of *rèstavek* who have self-identified coming out of this work, who are now saying, you know, I don't know, I don't want to talk about that. But it's a really big deal to admit that that's happened to you. It's a way bigger deal if you're a man because most of these guys have also been victims of sexual violence and that's even more taboo. So they all have declared that they want to be involved in kind of putting an end to this and are, you know, working together right now to feel comfortable coming together as a group who will publicly say, "We have lived this and never again would we want this for another child." But that's slow, slow work and it's being led by two women that work for the Child Protection Team in Port-au-Prince, who are adult survivors of *rèstavek*. You know, kind of the people you come across when you read victims' stories.

**Schneider:** You already kind of touched on this a little bit when you were discussing the two different programs, but what is the best way to prevent vulnerable persons from ending up in situations of *rèstavek*?

**Silencieux:** Well that's a question of, well, I mean for me, according to the work that our partners are doing, right?

**Schneider:** Yes.

**Silencieux:** Economic justice for those families, their ability to have a sufficient level of food security and income. So the idea that, you know, just as long as you give people food it's fine, it's not that you can't pay school fees or buy books or uniforms or shoes with cabbage. People need to eat, it's true and children you know the proximity in rural communities children are walking an average of three and a half hours a day. So you need to be able to eat to have the energy to get to the school. That's important. And so does the rest of your family but unfortunately, you know government is making strides towards better access to education but the work isn't finished yet. Um, so I think in terms of general things food security for all people and a sufficient and respectful livelihood, which you know ensures the people have access to the money they need.

Um, in terms of government processes, being here I know you've probably heard a little bit about the fact that this president is talking a lot about all these children who have gone to school for free, you know it's never been the biggest problem in terms of *rèstavek* that this his program hasn't touched yet is that, you know, in addition to the lack of sufficient number of schools and quality education is that the program is only for kids who have never been to school ever and are under the age of 12, or maybe it's 13.

The problem with kids in *rèstavek* is that once you've come home you may have never gone to school or may have gone to school on and off. You may have done grade one and then five years go by and you're way older. You might have the bravery to go back to grade two being way older than all the other kids,

but that burns out really quick. Your energy and interest in doing that burns out. But children who are over that age who have never been to school don't qualify for the free education program. So even though they completely lack that education, they can't access it.

Um, so yeah, I mean there's things that the government needs to do. I know everything kind of happens one piece and a time but our partner organizations are working to do advocacy around this. So yes, this is great. We're very happy that there have been baby steps around education but here's the light we need to shine on how this affects children who are over aged.

One of the things the government did several years ago which is really awesome, and then it kind of just disappeared into the ether, was they developed an accelerated primary education module so that kids who have been out of school but come back can go into a special classroom that fast-tracks them in three years to do all of their primary school education so that they can integrate back into regular schooling with other students. Um, our partners in the south are using that model in different communities so we provide support for them to start up special classrooms when children have been returned. And since the beginning of this program there's over a hundred kids now that have been returned at the motivation of the parents, who go through the training and it's like "whoa! I thought I sent my child into this great opportunity for them. Whoa, they could be victims of all sorts of stuff that's awful."

And it's one thing to make sure that people know what's going on, you need to have the awareness to make a change but then if you do bring your child

home and you still don't have – if the problems that led you to send them away are still in place it's kind of like a moral conundrum, right? You still don't have the money to feed them, you still don't have the money to send them to school. Um, but they would still say, what I've learned from some people is that the love and affection that a child will get from their own parents, they won't get it any where else. So that to me is kind of for them, we'll work on the other things in the mean time but it's not simple. I don't want to, I know I'm kind of trying to give you an overview but I don't mean to paint the picture that this is in any way simple and I'm not a parent, so I say that with no judgment and I have the ultimate respect for families who make tough decisions. I can't imagine what that's like.

**Schneider:** How has the mission of your organization changed over the last 10 or so years?

**Silencieux:** I'd love to tell you but I haven't been around that long to know. Um, Beyond Borders works, they have kind of four pillar areas that they want to be working in. Globally Beyond Borders is focused on supporting grassroots movements around the social movements, people movements rather than, again there is the dominant narrative idea of 'white people who know better who come to a foreign country to dictate outcomes and approaches.' That's the, I think the most ideal version of ourselves. I think, like I said, we're constantly in refinement and dialogue and process about that. It doesn't mean we succeed in doing it every day. We're learning and we're committed to being in relationship with our partners to be regularly assessing "Are we doing this well? Is this ok? Um, you

know, are we really being allies to this movement in a way that is mutually respectful and appropriate and counter-dominant narrative stuff?”

So the four missions that we support, and there’s kind of a fifth one, which for me is transversal for all of them. If my boss heard that he would argue with me. One of them is the end of the *rèstavek* system and an end to violence against women and girls, the movement towards quality education and access to education for all people and the movement towards sustainable and respectful livelihoods. The fifth one is this idea of being transformational, of being a witness to how other organizations are working in Haiti. I continue to argue that Beyond Borders does that in how it is, in how we interact with our partners, how we seek to accompany them, how I never go out to a meeting and say “this is my work.” I am very, very unwilling to be kind of the person identified with their work, the thing is I don’t go out in the field. I don’t insist on going out into the field. In fact, the Child Protection work, I’ve never seen it out in the field because the moment I would step out there the game would change.

But even before then. Beyond Borders has been around a long time, um, those, I think the nuisances of those missions have evolved, I can say that much, over time. But certainly this idea to transform the conventional mission mentality, the idea that, you know, all these oversimplified kind of things that you need to come here to do because Haitians can’t or they’re waiting for us to come and show them, that there are simple and Band-Aid solutions to complex multigenerational historical problems of brokenness.

So you know, the fifth mission piece comes from the identity of things, just to say it again – to be committed to working towards right relationships between foreigners and Haitians, so examining history and privilege and all those messy pieces that kind of people trendily touch on on Facebook but don't actually ever get in to. Having a mutually respectful process, so understanding 'yes, the reality is we need money to do this work and we need to fundraise to do it but how can we do it in a way that is as unobtrusive as possible, you know that doesn't feel gross, that doesn't take away from the work that's happening in the field.' Constantly seeking to be an ally in a positive way, a real ally, authentically.

The other one, like I said, being counter-narrative: we're very careful in the stories that we tell and who we ask to tell the stories and what we're saying about Haiti, so that we're certainly never saying, you know, 'Well it's just very easy, *rèstavek* can be over with your five dollars a month.' You know, or I don't know, all this kind of stuff that bigger organizations with way bigger budgets do but, um, we just don't because that's not who we are.

One of the, I think, the pieces that's changed that I'm aware of that I can tell you about is that in its earlier history, Beyond Borders did have a lot more of a connection to the evangelical church in the U.S. And it had a lot of kind of a vein coming out of Tony Campolo and his supporters and that's something that has, from our experiences with our partners here in Haiti before I came along has become more broad and inclusive at the pushing of the people here in Haiti. So that's a big change in the identity of the organization.

**Schneider:** Why do you think that was?



**Silencieux:** Because the partners here really wanted to move towards being more inclusive and, um, I think there are other dynamics too around that on the U.S. side but for Haiti that is what the partners would say and we still live that, right? The distinctions between Protestants and the inability to have cross-collaboration for the most part between those groups and lack of, what do you call that again, interfaith and ecumenical dialogue in Haiti is a real challenge, but I mean that exists in civil society too, the lack of coordination between NGOs and intensive competition for limited resources is a really huge barrier.

So wanting to be respectful of that environment and that movement building, means ‘build a bigger tent’ and constantly asking “Who’s not in the tent? Who’s voice isn’t here?”. As long as we’re all under this kind of common goal then everyone should be here. But again that’s all before I came along so I’m just repeating what other people have told me. I don’t know if that was a helpful answer, if you need more specifics you’ll have to ask somebody who’s a little bit longer in the tune.

**Schneider:** What do you think the biggest strengths of your organization are?

**Silencieux:** Our identity. I think what I’ve just outlined. Again, that we, uh, every single person that works here speaks Kreyol and when we have new staff that come on that’s part of what they’re required to learn, to speak Kreyol. Kendra’s doing really well.

Um, that, uh, we are focused on being guided by what is respectful and constantly being in evaluation of that, not what is the most acceptable for our constituents in the U.S. We’re constantly in tension about that but, um, and that

we don't, you know, just constantly give in to the desires of the West. Like if we wanted to, I could be hosting a group every week and we don't do that for a good reason. But it's just the commitment to being in right relationship with Haiti and constantly moving in refinement of that. That's a huge strength. This means that the work that we're doing, um, that our partners are doing and the way we work with our partners is really effective and is towards change that's sustainable, so that's all.

**Schneider:** On the contrary, what do you think are some areas where you could improve?

**Silencieux:** I think in the same way we try to be super respectful and we try to be in a balance, sometimes we fail at that. I mean there are necessary, I wouldn't say necessary evils that we do sometimes have to go through and they have to go through. Donors and, um, those are always, for me being the person standing on the gap, I'm the cultural kind of interlocutor in those moments and, um, it's a fragile space to be in. And we just kind of prayerfully go into it and we do a lot of planning ahead of time and a lot of preparing the ground for whatever might happen and a lot of debriefing afterwards.

It requires a lot of, a *lot* more grace and a lot more patience on the part of the Haitians, often to sometimes receive questions that come from a place of ignorance that's not mean but it's hurtful, often. And yeah, navigating that space. I think every day that I'm here I'm seeking to be better at that, to continually develop my understanding of the culture and nuisances of being in between and how to reduce that harm because it's, what we are doing is weird, this is a weird

space to be in, don't you think? It's like, I um, doing translation and being not just the language but the kind of 'Here's how a question is kind of weird and here's how I'm going to change that question and present it because blah blah blah,' you know? And it's a gift to be in that spot and it's very challenging. So, I don't know – we do like midwifery, sometimes it's really dirty and messy. [laughs]

**Bluntschli:** [laughs] But a great thing comes out of it.

**Silencieux:** Yeah but it's like there's a lot of shit and blood in the middle.

**Bluntschli:** It's amazing. But that's life. I mean, yeah, learning and growing.

**Silencieux:** I just, like, it's some days we're great and some days we suck at it and it's just because it's real. It's live space. You know?

I kind of, it's interesting when I go into meetings with other people that work in these organizations and, you know, I met a woman last week that's been in Haiti for *ten years*, ten years, and does not speak a word of Kreyol. And, you know, kind of going on, these are my peers in similar organizations and I just, like, I always feel like kind of very strange duck at these meetings because it's like, "You go *where*?" and it's like I don't feel like the reengage and neither do you [looking at Carla]. These people, the levels of interactions and relationships, I know that we're really different when I'm in that kind of context, when people are, "How do you know that? You go where?" I can't imagine, I can't imagine what that's like. But, uh, I'm thankful I don't work for an organization like that. I like walking. [laughs]

**Schneider:** What programs or parts of programs have been the most successful and why do you think that is?

**Silencieux:** Um, well I think the thread that brings results for both of our partners that are working on the rèstavek issue is the fact that the tools and the methodology they're using were developed in Haiti by Haitians; it comes rooted in the Haitian experience. So the stories they're using to open the topics of discussion with people are lived experiences that on the part of Haitians. The dialogue model is one that's really worked in harmony with just general Haitian culture because it's an oral tool, it's discussion, and it's not one that relied on kind of a teacher, kind of a hierarchy – it's a very equalizing environment.

And, um, one of the things that, in the city anyway, I mean, it's interesting: we talked towards the end of the six months, they start doing some assessment tools. They use a tool called Most Significant Change, for example, where everyone in the group will identify what's the most significant change that's taken place in their lives as a result of taking part in this training program. They talk about, you know, things like they no longer use corporal punishment, you know physical punishment with their children; they may talk about, you know, if they had children in their home who are not their biological children, a change in that – sometimes they are inspired to help them find their families and send them home.

But the most common response, which is so shocking, is that, um, they have a very different and better relationship with children in general. And the idea that when children are at a certain age here, they're not – the proper phrase in Kreyol is “timoun se bèt.” And that people get away from that kind of popular idiom, which means that like a child is basically an animal, right? The idea that

kind of until a certain age the child hasn't developed a consciousness, enough to be considered a person. Um, but that's reversed, and for people that's a big deal.

And also the second, to me, most significant indicator of change is people's understanding that it's not only something they can do but it's a responsibility to intervene and that they have the tools to do so, when other people are, you know, behaving poorly. So in the process of this tool though, you're talking about what's changed in your life but you're not just kind of reporting this to some miscellaneous *blanc* [Kreyol for "white"], you're speaking in the context of all of your neighbors. So if you stand up and say, "Well I don't beat my kids anymore," your neighbor is going to be like, "Bologna!" You know? They're going to call you out on in. It relies on, eh, preexisting Haitian community structures, like the social fabric already to kind of carry it forward and then, you know, these are people who are in their own community so as much as possible it comes from Haitians and it stays in their hands.

It's not a sort of external intervention that tends to be really expensive and temporary. Kind of, you know, people not just in Haiti and across the Caribbean and Central America we see research on what's the impact of NGOs, and more specifically visiting groups; it's like it's really great to come, it's like the circus. You know it's fun and you bring treats and you have a good time and then you go and it's over. And, uh, yeah, I think as much as possible community based solutions that come from local wisdom and that's applicable to the people here, that's what creates a lasting change. I'm rambling, sorry.

*[Off topic – this portion of the interview has not been transcribed]*

**Silencieux:** I mean certainly we have all these community organizations now that have emerged in Port-au-Prince. They've become kind of an entity of their own and some of them go on to do, they might, you know, November 17<sup>th</sup>, is it the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>? The 17<sup>th</sup>... I think, is the Journée National Contra Rèstavek. So they might say, "We want to do an event to honor this day, which is the National Day Against the Practice of Rèstavek." So they might do door-to-door activities where they go around and do kind of a little knocking on doors, doing some awareness raising. They might have a huge community event. They might, you know, um, have a big community party and then take an opportunity in the middle to do some teaching around this stuff or organize, uh, parent groups that go in to the schools and talk to the school direction about corporal punishment, you never know.

There's differences across all of them. We don't prescribe outcomes but a lot of them as organizations use music as a way of communicating with people, even to express their identity as a group and that's one thing that's really interesting in Haiti that cultural messaging via activists and the array of musicians who talk about social issues. That's really an integral part of making change in Haiti, so that's interesting. I'd like to hear Moma sing it. [In reference to song mentioned in portion of interview that was not transcribed.]

**Schneider:** Who do you think are the most vulnerable populations?

**Silencieux:** To rèstavek?

**Schneider:** Yes.

**Silencieux:** People living in the country, in the rural places. So we're talking about people who are, eh, extremely poor – below the whatever, "Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. People live on less than two dollars a day." A lot of these families, they don't see *any* money. None. I've been in the homes of families recently who actually have, like, *never* seen money. They don't have any use for it. Where they are, they're hours and hours away anything.

**Schneider:** So people that are just subsistence living?

**Silencieux:** Subsistence living. They're not landowners. They may you know, have a house on some land and are borrowing space where they garden but they are extremely vulnerable. If at any point, you know if the area where they're living in, is determined by the government to be interesting for tourism, they'll be picked up and moved some where else.

Um, the extremely poor and among that, you know, women are more vulnerable because they have less access to everything and culturally are less respected people. You know, the extremely vulnerable are women who don't have their male partner living in the household with them and in the rural areas for sure.

**Schneider:** In what ways, if any, do you think that NGOs are more about to combat the *rèstavek* system and aid survivors, as opposed to the government?

**Silencieux:** It's not our role. It's not our role as foreigners to intervene in any way. I think that the posture that's appropriate is to listen and support what Haitian civil society is designated as change that is necessary. Um, I mean I think change happens on an individual basis because what you need is ultimately one

person at a time to change their attitudes around the abuse and mistreatment of children and *rèstaveks*. Everyone – people who are vulnerable to send their kids away, people who might receive children, people who would see themselves as not touched by this problem at all; to develop a critical mass within the population that then can, together with civil society, encourage the government to take steps to better protect, defend, and fulfill the rights of children in Haiti. I don't think, I mean ultimately it's the citizens' and government's responsibility and our role...

**Schneider:** So your role is more like advocacy?

**Silencieux:** I can't, we as foreigners can't do advocacy here in Haiti. It's not our responsibility. You can do, how I understand advocacy, I'm a citizen of Canada, I can do advocacy in Canada. I can do advocacy in Canada around how the Canadian government is intervening in Haiti. I cannot speak to the Haitian government. It's a privilege that I'm here, it's a gift that I'm here – I'm not a citizen, it's not my place. I can, however, sit with and ask questions of Haitian organizations and ask experts who are working on *rèstavek* to say, "What needs to change and how can I help? How can we help? What can other countries do to assist?"

The question of *rèstavek* unfortunately is not really something that, um, I don't encourage other people to, "Well now you need to go home and tell the American government to put pressure on the Haitian government to stop doing this or there will be an embargo or there will be this." That's not, I think it's good to continue to be aware of the positive movement the government makes and to support them. If you never ever ever say anything positive when people are



making change, even if the change is incomplete and they haven't arrived yet but they're on the road, it's helpful to say, "Yes, thank you, congratulations for this. Here's what you need to remember. Here are the kids who are over-age and are being left behind. Here's where schools need to be focused. Here's how the education that's accelerated, that program can be." Whatever. Just say "thank you" and be encouraging of the work that has been done. And to make sure that when the NGOs that are working here are supportive to the work the government is doing.

It's, one of the kind of dominant narrative lies, is that the government has *no* capacity and has no plans. While their plans are incomplete and it is true that there is a lot of corruption here, there's a lot of corruption in my country [Canada] but it's not talked about in the same way. Yes there's corruption, yes there's lack of capacity but there's some areas that do have capacity. For example, there's the Social Welfare, Institut du Bien-Être, here in Haiti is making *huge* strides to work in partnership with... They're doing good things and they're making progress. So it's ridiculous to say, "Well, there isn't anything. There's no structure so we can just come in and set up an orphanage or whatever."

To come in to this environment and say that there's nothing going on or there's no planning, or to come in to an agricultural program – there's the Department of Agriculture, there's the Ministry of Agriculture, there's the National Food Security Committee, each of which have five-year plans. You know, these things exist. To come in and to know what you're doing supports the

work of the government is part of working to make Haiti stronger in a sustainable way, rather than a way that's, you know, cutting grass under its feet.

**Schneider:** Do you think the *rèstavek* system is a priority for the government? Or is it more indirect, like they're focused on education to kind of prevent it?

**Silencieux:** I don't think it's an active priority. I think the system of *rèstavek*, for the government, in terms of, it's not through education that that's a priority. I think there's good progress, I mean there's some laws right now that are in the process of being put in to, how do you say that – "*mettre en fonction*," like put into operation. Like when a law goes into the House in the U.S. and it's approved and is passed but then there's a term before it's released and like becomes official. Laws around trafficking, laws around the reinsertion of children.

There's work being done around children who are in conflict with the law; there's a big interaction between children who are in *rèstavek* who run away, both boys and girls, who then become in conflict with the law because they're homeless and either involved in petty theft or prostitution, who end up in jail. So it's, they're estimating right now that almost 70% of the kids that are in jail right now are kids who ran away from *rèstavek*.

While the work in the Carceral and Justice System is happening, we need to have more, for example, the constitution provides that in every department of the country there should be a tribunal for children and a judge who is trained and will only hear legal cases associated with minors. There's only one in the country right now and that's in Port-au-Prince. So all the kids in all the departments are just being held in the police stations and the holding cells and then maybe they'll

get transferred to an adult prison. If they're boys they're held in general population, if they're girls they get \* to a very small women's prison. There's, there are two facilities for children. There's a justice, Kenny calls it a remand center, but if you translate it you could say "child prison." It's prison, it's jail. There are two new facilities that are for boys but, like I said, the girls are still in general population and in the countryside everyone is in general population.

So there are trends that kind of intersect across all of the work that is happening, even with the Ministry of Planning and the work around tightening up adoption laws, like all of this stuff is about the vulnerability of kids. But, um, it's slow work and I think the government moves, I don't know how much more slowly but it moves really slow here, you know? But every time there's insecurity, every time there's a change in government, parliament stops – the process of moving these laws forward, the legal reform, constitutional reform that's necessary just, it's totally detrimental. Because, you know, you go into an election and whatever, right? It's slow stuff but I think, I think I've been clear about what I think the role of NGOs is – to support Haitian organizations, Haitian civil society activists in determining the future of this discussion.

#### *Transcript 4*

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**Job Title: Technical Assistant to the Director General**

**Organization:** Institut du Bien-Être Social (IBES) [Ministry of Social Well-Being]

**Date: March 13, 2014**

**Translated By:** Carla Bluntschli

**Schneider:** What kinds of programs does this ministry implement to help with the *rèstavek* system?

**IBES:** First of all we don't want to use the word "*rèstavek*" any more; we use "domestic labor." These children are working in domestic work. So it doesn't really respond to the whole entirety of the situation because there's all types, this [term] doesn't exactly describe all of the different types. When a child is put in home with family it doesn't necessarily mean that they are a *rèstavek*. And there's often stigmatization [associated with the term *rèstavek*] too that we're trying to get away from. The whole idea of child labor and exploitation, and within the families too, so it's not just the situation where a child is placed in a family but that may be the way the people, the parents, are treating children in the same neighborhood or even their own children. The children are working, definitely. So they [IBES] are basically putting into the whole context of children being exploited.

I will also explain to you what this whole office takes care of. It's generally to improve the well-being of the population in general; this should be in general what all of the government does but the laws and the practices... So we have three different places where we actually [focus]. First of all, children, women, and family. Mainly with unemployed people; everybody is in a difficult situation. But we have definitely concentrated ourselves in these three terms – children, women, and family.

So it has become a governmental organization where it has become for the protection of children, that's what it's become, and also reinforcing family. We're

doing a whole bunch of programs – abused or raped children, or kidnapped children, and also children who are working, who are in labor situations; everything about children interests. But we have a program where we try to ensure children do *not* become victims to begin with, but if they do become victims then we take care of them.

**Schneider:** What does the program do?

**IBES:** I was just getting there. There is a judicial part to what they do. If a child is a victim, somebody has caused them to be a victim. And so we work with the courts system and with the police. We also have like a detective department that goes out to investigate. So we also have regular inspections. So it's like a judicial police force that is like a detective force; so they are both administrative and judiciary.

So now we'll talk about the children who are in labor. After [age] 14 they can work; it's an international convention. They shouldn't be working at lower [younger] than that. Yeah, even if they're 14 or 15 they can work but there's certain types they shouldn't do – we have a list of certain types of work the children can't do, dangerous types of work.

**Schneider:** Can they work full time at this age?

**IBES:** No. And this isn't the reality, this is the supposed to situation according to what the law says and what's established. Yeah, but the real situations that occur involve children. We don't have the exact figures but at the end of the year we will. We're not sure how many children in total are in domestic labor, we think 50,000 up to 500,000 maybe. But we don't use those figures. We're not sure that

they're very accurate. So there's confusion about it what means [when] a child is placed in a family and someone is actually working, a child is actually working. Yeah, the figures are just too big. So we admit that we don't have the figures but we'll have them at the end of the year. We're doing research to get the figures. So we're consulting people like UNICEF and the Office of Labor. We can see, it's the reality of Haiti, everybody would get that.

There's a difference that we really want to distinguish – a child may be placed in their aunt's home and there may be general abuse going on, but to really consider it a child that is being worked, you know, hard is a different category. We're not going to use that word [rèstavek] anymore. And there's also children that are working in clubs too. Even though prostitution isn't forbidden under the law, children are forbidden from [working in] prostitution. So there's also different terms for the same sort of things we understand as orphanages, but even in those there are children that are working in domestic labor. Also working in the factories, that has diminished a lot though. So we have a committee that's three parts – state, factory owners, and the unions that work in the industry park that make sure that the child labor issue [is acknowledged]. So they make sure there aren't children in that kind of situation.

Now to get to the programs that we have, that you asked about. Ok so, it's a coordination between several groups. A cluster of people who are working together, on different levels. So this office right here... I'll explain what we do when we have children that come here. But we have a program of prevention. So if a child is in labor... If somebody brings a child in here that they see was

working in a difficult situation like that, it could be the police too, we have a number, emergency number too – a hotline, 133, so people can call and tell us about situations. So when the children come here like that, we take care of the child, we do a temporary placement for the child. We have medical follow-up, psychological follow-up; everything physical about the child is taken care of.

And after the child is stabilized, we research to see if the child has parents. If they have parents, we're going to work with the parents so the parents can take the child back. We see why the child wasn't in the home and was working somewhere, to understand what happened. We do a mediation with the family to understand and to see if the child can go back to the family. And 95% go back to their families. We follow-up with the family to make sure they [the child] go to school. We also make sure the child has identification; this year we started doing that. So we try to make sure the family is managing the child and taking care of it. We do give a bit of money [to the family]. What we do instead of doing it just like a welfare, is we try to create a situation for the family to make sure that they can take care of the child, like a little business. We don't really take back the money, it's not really like a loan – it's said to be a loan but we never take it back. So we're basically affiliated with some credit unions so that the family is able to start a business and then eventually as they gain confidence they can build a bigger business. So the money never really comes back, it's always with affiliation with the credit union.

**Schneider:** So the hope of this program is that they [the families] won't be in a situation where they have to send their children away again?

**IBES:** Yeah. It's out in the provinces that this happens. Since 2012 we have had offices in all of the different departments. So when we have children, especially from the rural areas, from very far away, especially since 2011 we've been doing that [follow-up programs], since it's really difficult for a group to go back with the child – it's a lot of wasted time and energy and money to take the child all the way back to Jérémie, which is very far. So now that we have offices in the different departments it's easier to follow-up.

So we have the hotline, it's connected through all the different departments so they [returned children] can keep in touch and let them [IBES staffers] know. So these are all the things we do with the child that comes in here but if the child doesn't have a family there are certain things we can do. It used to be done that the child was put up for adoption, for international adoption. So if a child is out in the streets and they don't have a family and they don't have an ID, we work with the mayor's office. You can adopt a child up to 16 years old, so we put them in a list if they don't have a family; we put them on a list to be adopted. Now there's different solutions, now we have like host families, foster families. There could be a national or international adoption as well. That's when the kids come in.

But when we go out and do inspections... So anywhere that we suspect that children might be in labor, or we can go out to a neighborhood. So if the child comes in from a neighborhood and we suspect that there might be more children like that, we go out and do inspections. We go out to the orphanages too where there's children working in the orphanages. And we go to the clubs. We go to the



industries [factories] too even though they have the group that works there. And offices where people work. And sometimes, but not regularly, we go out to the agricultural fields.

**Schneider:** What are the biggest challenges that IBES faces?

**IBES:** To know how many children are in that situation. Oh I didn't tell you about this prevention, but we have a whole system about that. So we already have the inspection... We have a campaign too that's being done. So in each commune, or district, there's two or three committees of "community based organizations" for child protection. So they're courageous and they're great people out there there doing that. They also give us signals when they know there are certain cases happening.

The challenge right now is to know how many children. Intervention, taking care of, prevention, and knowing the cases. But having the funds available... To, instead of just supporting the child in the difficulty, but [also supporting] the family and that's the biggest challenge really, it requires more funds. You need to have the finances. They [parents] don't go to that angle [the financial concerns]; they just want to be with the child. It's about supporting the family. The first thing is that we don't see it as a money issue right away. When you want to reinforce the family, the reflection, the dialogue.

To send a child away, it's not a problem of economic harm to the family necessarily because you'll find families that have the same economic level that don't send their children away. Like an 18-year-old woman who has a child, the father has left, so she's by herself and she wants to go back to school. Maybe she

has a job. So what happens? So she sends the child away to a family. So it's a potential problem, she doesn't get to support herself. This family doesn't respect principles and they'll put the child to work. That's a *big* challenge for us.

So I'm going to do some analysis of how we're working and the end results to work really in the prevention before reinforcing the value of family to begin with. And parental responsibility. So there's also laws about paternity that need to be applied, that they [fathers] have a responsibility toward the child. When a father doesn't take care of a child we push them to take responsibility, with Justice, through using the legal system. And 95% of the problems for protection of children in Haiti, when you do the whole big map overview, one of the central subjects is the separation of families, families who separated. First of all, the fathers who are irresponsible/disrespectful\*<sup>82</sup> and the mothers, single mothers who have to work to take care of the child. Then they go out in the streets in order to help their family and it will push them to exploitation and mistreatment and that's when the child would be in domestic labor.

A lot of these children, too, they're underage and they'll get into prostitution. They also get violated [raped] and they're vulnerable to gangs too. The child, it's hard to say how many crimes they'll have been a part of – they think, “If they want me to do something, then I'll do it – I need money.” Another sad thing, if you would take the whole concept about children working, it's the abandonment of the mother first of all.

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<sup>82</sup> \*Unclear audio – here I have made my best guess as to what was said.

So these people who are mobile people... So in other words, people who have had children abandon them because they have to move on. First it's the father and second it's the mother. Yeah, and the children that are abandoned by their mother and the family have the risk to become street children. So they become vulnerable to all other kinds of situations – working in homes or on the streets.

Those are three challenges: to know how many children we have; financing – that means financing before the child is... preventative, to work with families.

